

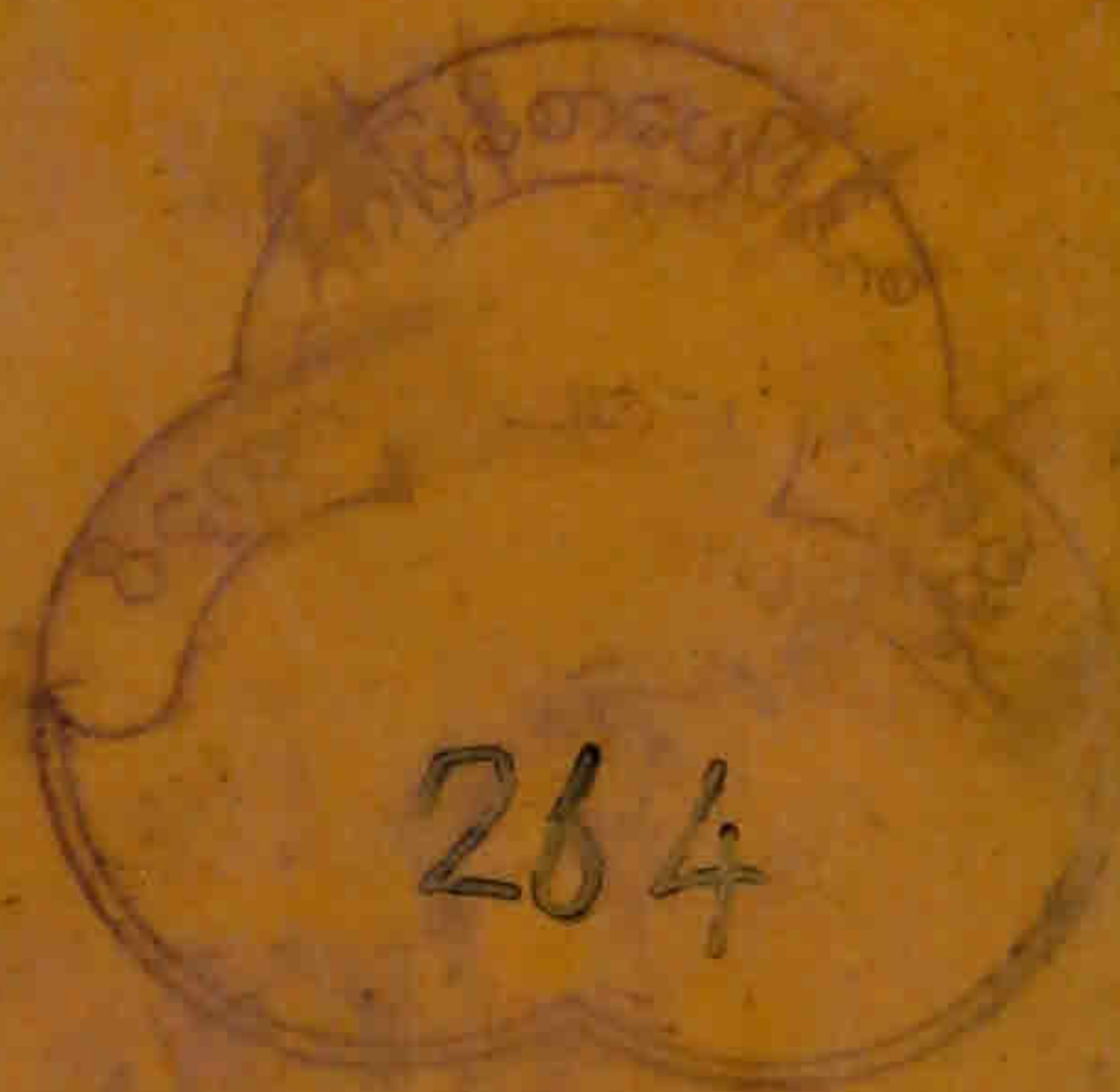
NIBBĀNAPATISAMYUTTA KATHĀ

OR

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

A discourse by

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw of Burma



Translated by U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin)

Buddhasāsanā Nuggaha Organization

Mahāsi Thāthana Yeikthā

Rangoon

NIBBANAPATISAMYUTTA KATHA

or

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBANA

by

THE VENERABLE MAHĀSI SAYĀDAW

of

BURMA

Department for the Promotion and
Propagation of the Dāsana

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Kaba-A, Yangon.

Translated by U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin)

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Nibbānapatisamyutta Kathā
or
ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

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FOREWORD

This book of dhamma concerning Nibbāna namely, "On the Nature of Nibbāna" embraces the basic method of practical vipassanā meditation and also how nibbānic peace is achieved while practising insight-meditation. Where Pāli and Commentaries are difficult of understanding, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, who is the author, has given precise and clear explanation. It offers lucid instructions to those yogis following a wrong path with erroneous views to enable them to tread on the Right Path. To cite an example, the Sayadaw has clearly instructed that if at the beginning of the exercise in meditation when every phenomenon that takes place at the six sense-doors cannot possibly be noted, one of the more obvious bodily behaviours should be noted first, e. g. while walking, the act of walking and manoeuvring of limbs should first be observed and noted; as also in respect of other bodily actions. The most obvious phenomenon of *rūpa*, namely, the rising and falling of the abdomen is, therefore, emphasized for the *yogi*, to note. Only when *samādhi* gains momentum then all other phenomena that occur at the six sense-doors may be noted.

In this dhamma, the concept of *nibbāna* has been fully elucidated commencing from the

FOREWORD

attainment of the stage of *sa-upādisesa nibbāna* up to the final destination of *anupādisesa nibbāna* arrived at by death called '*parinibbāna*'. Further explanation given is; "Buddha has preached that with the achievement of an arahat stage when *kilesās*, defilements, have ceased to exist, the remnant of *vipakkhandhā*, still remains and that this state of condition is known as *sa-upādisesa*. After the demise or '*parinibbāna*' of an arahat, both the remnant of *vipakkhandhā* and *kilesās* totally cease to exist and all matter, mind and mental formations become extinct. This complete cessation and extinction is known as *anupādisesa*.

In this book as in all his sermons or written texts on dhamma, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw makes a dual exposition of the theoretical aspect of the dhamma based upon scriptures, i.e. *pariyatti*, and the practical aspect of insight-meditation exercises, *paṭipatti*, thereby affording yogis a comprehensive knowledge of the dhamma. Mention has also been made of the burden of the Five Aggregates of Clinging and of the burden of *akusala dhamma*, *abi-sankhāra*, and the method of throwing down the burdens so as to escape all sufferings arising from *kilesā*, cravings, with rebirth, ensuing.

The Venerable Sayadaw has made it convincingly clear in plain language that new existence is the resultant effect of *kusala* and *akusala*

FOREWORD

dhamma, merits and demerits! Past actions of previous activities are known as *kamma*; their results are called *Vipāka* in Buddhism. The new existence that has arisen causes the formation of *nāma-rūpakkhanda* which brings forth *kilesās*. *Kilesās*, cravings of all forms, generate *kamma*. The *kamma* of the past has created the conditions of the present, while the *kamma* of the present is creating the conditions that will exist in the future. As long as this kammic force exists, there is rebirth. To get rid of *kilesās*, *kamma* and the resultant effect, *vipāka*, endeavour should be made to indulge in *dāna* (charitableness), *sila* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (developing meditation) with special emphasis on *vipassanā* type of meditation exercise to eventually gain *magga-phala ñāṇa*, *nibbāna*. On attaining *arahatta magga* and its fruition, all *kamma* with its *vipāka* would cease.

In so far as the doctrine of Nirvana (*Nibbāna*) is concerned, Buddha has taught us that Nirvana is a state which is the natural and inevitable result of the extinction of cravings. And among the forms of craving which must be rooted out, is the longing for continued separate existence in this life and hereafter.

There are a number of current views according to different schools of thought concerning *Nibbāna*. Some probably think that *Nibbāna* is a celestial palace or a palatial mansion; an

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abode of tremendous dimension, a big city or a radiance or a spectacular dazzling light. Some hold the view that it is a state in which the individual soul is completely absorbed in the universal soul, etc. These are all wishful thinking arising out of ignorance.

Nāgasena, the great Buddhist Philosopher compares Nirvana to the lotus flower and concludes by saying: "And if you ask, how Nirvana is to be known, I say it is won by freedom from distress and danger, by confidence, by peace, by calm, by bliss, by happiness, by delicacy, by purity, by freshness." (Milinda-pañā).

"Sire, Nirvana is. It is cognisable by mind thus purified, lofty, straight, without obstructions, without temporal desires. There is Nirvana; but it is not possible to show by colour or configuration."

Nirvana, after all, aims at making our life serene by extinguishing all forms of craving. The very idea of Nirvana is the state of mind co-existent with this serenity. And it is in the Buddhist conception of Nirvana that we have the most complete analysis of the Universe. No real peace and happiness is possible unless a man is free from the selfish desire and egoism caused by the threefold craving. It is the way out of this craving and the attainment of eternal

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peace that is taught by the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana as the supreme destiny awaiting all humanity.

The first and the last word on Nirvana was said by Nāgasena in one phrase: "Nirvana is!" for no discussion with the finite mind will enable one to cognize the Infinite. It cannot be conceived; it can only be experienced.

It is hoped that after going through this book thoroughly, one will find what *Nibbāna* means without any ambiguity. The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw has explained it in unequivocal terms which may be summarised as: *Nibbāna* is eternal peace. It is brought about by the attainment of *arahatta magga* that can be acquired by following the right Path through the actual practice of *Vipassanā* insight-meditation. All traces of *kilesās*, *kamma* and *vipāka*, bad effects of kamma are completely obliterated and eradicated when one attains *Nibbāna*. With this accomplishment a state of consciousness is reached whereby all cravings or *taṇhā* passes into *parinibbāna*. This is the end of all sufferings.

May you all be happy and enlightened.

Min Swe

Secretary

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization.

NIBBANAPATISAMYUTTA KATHA

or

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBANA

by

THE VENERABLE MAHASI SAYĀDAW

PART I

(A discourse delivered on the 8th waxing of Tawthalin, 1326 B.E., corresponding to the 14th. September, 1964).

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of my lecture on Culavedalla Sutta last week, I made references to the catechism of Visākha, the Rich, and Dhammadinnā Theri, the elder abbess. "What," asked the former, "is the sensation of pleasure like?" The latter answered: "It is like the sensation of pain." Pleasure and pain are diametrically opposed to each other; but what the votary would like to impress upon the rich man is that they are one and the same phenomenally.

The following questions and answers also ensued:

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Q. What is the sensation of indifference to pleasure and pain like?

A. It is like ignorance.

When pleasure and pain arise either in the body or in the mind it is easily cognizable. But indifference cannot be easily felt. For instance, greed and anger can be known at once as soon as they assert themselves; but when ignorance is at work it does not reveal itself clearly. Therefore indifference is very much like ignorance in its manifestation.

Q. What is ignorance like?

A. It is like knowledge.

Knowledge, here, means the knowledge of the Path possessed by the Worthy Ones, *ariyamagga-ñāṇa*, while ignorance means covering up of that knowledge. The former recognizes the Four Noble Truths and reveals them to all, while the latter, not knowing them, tries to hide them. Knowledge, here, is thesis and ignorance its antithesis.

Q. What is knowledge?

A. It is *vimutti*, deliverance.

Vimutti signifies the fruition of the Path. In fact, the Path (*magga*) and its fruition (*phala*) are identical, because they are different aspects of the same fulfilment. Fruition is the beneficial

INTRODUCTION

result of the realization of the Path achieved by the *Ariyas*. It is recurrent. Therefore, knowledge and deliverance are synonymous.

Q. What, then, is deliverance like?

A. It is like nibbāna.

When one is absorbed in the fruition of the Path, one is in perfect nibbāna-peace. Nibbāna is, therefore, equated with the fruition of the Path.

Q. What, then, is nibbāna like?

At this stage of the question, Dhammadinnā chastised Visākha. "You have gone too far," she said, "You have failed to stop where you should stop. According to Buddha's teaching, nibbāna is the highest. Morality, concentration and wisdom end in nibbāna. They cannot go beyond it. So, you should not have asked what nibbāna is like. If you are not satisfied with my explanation, you may refer the matter to Buddha himself.

Visākha at once wended his way to Buddha and told the latter how he posed the questions and how he got the answers. "If I were asked," Buddha said, "I would have answered your questions in the same way as Dhammadinnā answered." He praised her. And that is where my lecture ended.

At that time I thought of giving you a lecture on nibbāna as well. But lack of time.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

prevented me from doing so. Only today can I manage to deliver this discourse for your benefit.

WHAT IS NIBBĀNA ?

Nibbāna means extinction or annihilation. What is extinguished or annihilated? The round of suffering in the realm of defilement (*kilesa vaṭṭa*), of action (*kamma vaṭṭa*) and of result of action (*vipāka vaṭṭa*) is extinguished or annihilated. The realm of defilement encompasses *avijjā*, ignorance, *taṇhā*, craving, and *upādāna*, clinging or attachment. The realm of action includes both meritorious and demeritorious deeds that contribute to the emergence of the endless round of rebirths. The realm of the result of action, usually called kamma-result, relates to the consequences of actions, good or bad. Every action produces a resultant of mind, matter, six sense-bases, feeling etc. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking are all manifestations of the result of action or *vipāka*.

Failure to grasp at insight-knowledge which recognizes the real nature of existence when a man sees or hears something is ignorance. When he declares that he sees or hears something, he does so with the wrong notion that it is actually his ego that sees or hears. But in fact, there is no ego. This wrong notion

WHAT IS NIBBĀNA ?

deludes one into believing that things are permanent or pleasing or satisfactory. It, therefore, gives rise to craving, which, as it intensifies, develops into clinging. This is how defilement builds up its own empire.

As soon as clinging to sense-objects develops, efforts must at once be made to satisfy the desire for those sense-objects. Then volitional activities or *saṅkhāra* would start operating. In the present context they may be called kamma-formations, for they are responsible for forming or shaping actions. When, as a result of such formations, death takes place in the course of existence, it is inevitably followed by rebirth, for *paṭisandhicitta*, rebirth-linking consciousness, arises soon after *cuticitta*, death-consciousness. Death is followed by becoming. In other words, a new life begins. This, it may be said, is a resultant (*vipāka*) of kamma-formations which again and again bring forth consciousness, mind, matter, six sense-bases, contact, feeling, etc.

Dependent, therefore, on *vipāka vaṭṭa*, there arises *kilesā vaṭṭa*; and dependent on *kilesā vaṭṭa*, there arises *kamma vaṭṭa*. The revolution of these three *vaṭṭas* is incessant throughout the endless round of existence. It is only when insight-knowledge is applied to the practice of noting the phenomena of arising and passing away of the aggregates that Path-consciousness develops and Nibbāna is brought near. At this stage, ignorance, with

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

its faithful attendant, defilement, is annihilated. In the absence of defilement, no fresh actions or *kammams* can be formed. Any residual *kamma* that happens to exist after the annihilation of defilement will be rendered inoperative or ineffective. For a Worthy One, Arahāt, no new life is formed after his death-consciousness. There is now a complete severance of the cord of existence which signifies annihilation in sight of Nibbāna.

Hence, the definition of Nibbāna runs thus:

*Nibbāti vaṭṭadukkham etthāti nibbanam;
nibbāti vaṭṭadukkham etasmim adhigateti va
nibbānam.*

In Nibbāna, the round of suffering comes to a peaceful end. Hence cessation of suffering is Nibbāna. In other words, when the Path of an Arahāt is reached, the round of suffering ceases.

Nibbāna is, therefore, peace established with the annihilation of suffering. For the sake of brevity, please note only this -- Nibbāna is synonymous with absolute peace. Annihilation brings about complete elimination of rounds of defilement, of action and of result of action. The Commentaries say that the state of peaceful coolness or *santi* is a characteristic of Nibbāna. When coolness occurs the ambers of suffering are extinguished. But what is to be noted with

RATANA SUTTA PARITTA

diligence is the complete annihilation of the three rounds of defilement, action and result of action which all go to create mind, matter, volitional activities, etc.

In Ratana Sutta, annihilation is described as quenching the flames. "*Nibbanti dhīra yathāyaṃ padīpo*," runs the relevant verse in Pāli. With men of wisdom like Arahats, all becoming is extinguished in the same manner as light is put out. Their old *kammas* or actions having come to exhaustion, no new *kammas* which create new becoming can arise. The flame of existence is thus put out.

RATANA SUTTA PARITTA

The relevant stanza in the Ratana Sutta has this to say:

*Khīnaṃ purāṇaṃ nava natthi sambhavaṃ.
Virattacittā yatike bhavaśmim;
Te khīnabijā avirullhichandā;
Nibbanti dhīrā yathāyaṃ padīpo.*

An Arahāt eliminates defilements with the extermination of all traces of them through the Path achieved by dint of insight-knowledge that he gains with the practice of insight-meditation of noting the arising and passing away of *nāma*, mind, and *rūpa*, matter that appear at his six sense-doors. Once freed from their shackles, he commits no evil whatsoever, although he

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

continues to indulge in actions which normally produce merits. He does good in a number of ways. For instance, he preaches the dhamma. He himself listens well to others preaching it. He regularly does obeisance to Buddha and elder monks. He gives away surplus food and clothing (i. e., the yellow robe) to those in need. He practises morality, concentration and insight-meditation with devotion. But as he has no defilement as his companion, these meritorious deeds are ineffective to produce kamma-formations. All the good that he does produce no results. In the absence of a new *kamma*, no new existence arises with him who has trodden the Path.

Uninformed laymen, I notice, misinterpret the texts and preach their followers that one should not perform meritorious deeds, because Arahats usually don't. If such teachings are given credence, people practising what they preach would not be acquiring any merit; instead, they would be doing things that will lead them to nether worlds. You may purposely avoid doing good. But that may not do you any harm, because that avoidance produces no reactions. But once you give way to evil deeds, the tendency would be for you to indulge in them without qualms or remorse, having been instigated by greed, anger, ignorance, pride and wrong views. Your evil actions would inevitably result

A HALT TO KAMMA-ACTIONS

in equally evil reactions, in which case you will gain admittance to nether worlds after your demise.

CALLING A HALT TO KAMMA-ACTIONS

If you really want to call a halt to new actions arising on the passing away of the old, you must practise insight-knowledge with a view to the realization of the Path and its fruition. I will tell you how to practise it. First you must perfect yourself in the observance of morality. Fortified with morality, you must acquire knowledge of concentration to perfect your meditation. If one practises *jhāna*, absorption, well and good; for with *jhāna* as a stepping stone one can strive for meditation with ease. But even though you cannot aim at *jhāna*, you can practise the exercise of watching the six sense-doors noting the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, in accordance with instructions contained in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

After all, this noting itself is vipassanā, the practice of insight-meditation. Before you are able to take note of all what is happening at the six sense-doors, you should, at the beginning, note any of your physical movements which is easily noticeable. For instance, if you are walking, begin the *vipassanā*-practice with noting, the phenomenon of walking. If you are sitting, be aware of your very act of sitting. Begin

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

with the physical movement which is, as I have said, easily palpable. For us we advise the yogis to note the rising and falling of the abdominal wall as they breathe in and out. While you are noting its movement your mind may wander. You may think about this and that, or you may imagine things. Note this thinking or imagining. You may feel tired. Note this tiredness. You may feel hot or painful as you exert. Note the arising and passing away of these sensations. Note the phenomenon of seeing as you see or hearing as you hear. When you experience pleasurable sensations, note them also.

PURITY OF MIND

At the beginning of *vipassanā*-practice, your power of concentration may be weak. So your mind goes off at a tangent. When your mind wanders, note its wandering. As you repeatedly note the phenomena, your power of concentration will get stronger and stronger, and your mind, unable to get away from the object that you are noting, will be at one with it. At times you may imagine things. Note this at once and eventually you will get familiar with the process of thinking. As soon as you are aware of this process, stop thinking about it and bring your mind to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Now you will come to realize that your mind noting the object at the present

PURITY OF BELIEF

moment has been preceded by your mind doing similarly in the past, and that it is being followed by your mind which will be doing similarly at the next moment. As it is all the time wholly occupied with the act of noting the object, it will get purified. And this is called *citta visuddhi*, purity of mind.

PURITY OF BELIEF

When the mind is thus made pure, it will be clear, being able to recognize sense-objects distinctly. This clarity brings one to the realization that the noting mind is distinct from the sense-objects that are being noted. After repeated exercises, a yogi will arrive at the conclusion that there are only two things in this entire process of noting, and that they are the knowing mind and the object known. At this state there has developed *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa*, knowledge of the reality of the phenomena through analysis of the aggregates into mind and matter. Once this knowledge comes into full bloom, *diṭṭhi visuddhi*, purity of belief, is achieved.

INVESTIGATING KNOWLEDGE

As one's belief or view has been thus purified, and as one continues insight meditation noting the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, one will be able to discern the cause and condition for mentality-materiality.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

This discernment is *paccayapariggaha ñāṇa*, knowledge of causes and effects. This knowledge purges all doubts; and this stage of purity is called *kaṅkhāvitarāṇa visuddhi*, purification by overcoming doubt. If one continues further with one's meditation, one will note that objects of observation arise anew again and again to disappear soon after appearance. Noting all this, one will be able to discern the three phases of the phenomena, namely, the arising phase, the static or developing phase and the dissolving phase. This is to say that the thing happening now was conditioned in the past, and will likewise be conditioned in the future. This stage of knowledge investigates the aggregates as composites; and the result of such investigation will invariably be the revelation that what appears and disappears is impermanent, *anicca*, unsatisfactory, *dukkha*, and unsubstantial, *anatta*. This investigating knowledge is named *samāsana ñāṇa*.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE RISE AND FALL OF AGGREGATES

As the yogi continues to note and reflect on the rise and fall of the five aggregates through the six sense-doors, *sati*, mindfulness, gains strength and he becomes aware of the rise and fall instantly as they occur. Thereby he establishes *patipassaddhi*, joy and tranquility. This knowledge of the rise and fall of *nāmarūpa* is *udayabbaya ñāṇa*.

STREAM-WINNER AND THE LIKE

Further reflection would reveal the hollow nature of conditioned things with the disappearance of their form and substance. Both the knowing mind and the object known dissolve as quickly as they present themselves. This knowledge with regard to dissolution of things is known as *bhaṅga ñāṇa*.

STREAM-WINNER AND THE LIKE

Application of *bhaṅga ñāṇa* gives rise to the establishment of *bhava ñāṇa* which looks at all dissolving things with fear or repugnance. Consequently it will lead to the development of *saṅkhāruppekkhā ñāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity towards all conditioned things, which regard all *kamma*-formations neither as repugnant nor as pleasurable. As this wisdom grows by continued practice of insight-meditation the knowing mind gets absorbed in the annihilation of all *nāma*, *rūpa* and *saṅkhāra* (*kamma*-formations). The realization of this knowledge is the realization of the Noble Path and its fruition. The moment this stage is reached, be it only for once, a yogi becomes a Stream-Winner, or *sotāpanna*. With him all past actions come to an end; and so no new bad actions that can drag him down to nether worlds would arise.

If a Stream-Winner continues to practise insight-meditation developing insight-knowledge beginning with *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, he shall realize

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the Noble Path and its fruition befitting a once-Returner and become a *sakadāgāmi*.

Continuing the practice of insight-meditation, a Once-Returner moves up to the next stage as a Non-Returner, *anāgāmi*, preparing himself for nibbāna. All past actions that could have led him to the world of the senses, *kāma-bhava* come to an end and no new actions that would direct him to nether worlds can arise. Here it may be asked whether *kusala kammās*, good actions, appertaining to *kāmāvacara*, domain of sensual pleasures, may not arise. No doubt such good actions occur; but since they are not accompanied by craving for sensual pleasures, *kāma-bhava*, or becoming in the sensual world, cannot recur. But, then, the question again arises whether good actions or *kāmāvacara* cannot produce results. By dint of the fact that actions must produce results, they will without doubt continue to do so; but the results would in this case be the Path and its fruition. This can be known from the story of Ugga.

ARAHATSHIP THROUGH ALMS-GIVING

Once, Ugga, a rich man, gave alms-food to Buddha and his disciples, saying that he was doing this *dāna*, charity, with a view to getting what he considered to be the most cherished reward. At the time of practising that *dāna*, he had already been an *anāgāmi*; and so

ARAHATSHIP THROUGH INSIGHT-MEDITATION

naturally, the most cherished reward he had in mind would be the Path and its fruition of Arahatsip, the next stage that an *anāgāmi* aspires to. When he died, he was reborn a Brahma in the plane of Suddhāvāsa. Remembering Buddha, he came down to earth to pay homage to the Teacher. "How now!" asked Buddha, "Have you realized what you cherished most?" The Brahma replied, "Yes, I have." Not long afterwards he gained the Path and its fruition and became an Arahats, Worthy One. This shows that an *anāgāmi* can realize the Path as a result of his *kusala kamma*, meritorious deed, performed in his life time in this world of the senses.

ARAHATSHIP THROUGH INSIGHT-MEDITATION

Although it has been said that Arahatsip can be achieved through *dāna*, it must be borne in mind that it does not come naturally or automatically without the practice of insight meditation. An *anāgāmi* must meditate with a view to the realization of the Path and its fruition as befitting an Arahats. If he does so he will see nibbāna. Once an Arahats, all defilements such as ignorance and craving become annihilated. All his past-kamma-actions cease. At this stage, he may practise charity, morality, insight-meditation, etc., as is his wont; but all these good actions, in the absence of defilements, produce no results. We then say that all his kamma-actions become ~~effete~~.

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Worldlings have a great attachment to the world they live in. They want an existence untroubled by old age, disease and death. But they are subject to the law of mortality. So they die. And, yet, when they die they desire to be reborn in another world which is better than that they left behind. Even *sotāpanna* and *sakadāgāmis* cannot get rid of this attachment altogether. For instance, *anāgāmis* aspire to get to the planes of Form Sphere of Formless Sphere. That is the reason why they are reborn in those Spheres after they have left this world. With Arahats, there is no longing or craving for existence.

NO YEARNING FOR DEATH NOR FOR LIFE

The following verse is usually uttered by Arahats in their triumph.

Nābinandāmi maraṇaṃ,
Nābinandāmi jivitaṃ,
Kālanca patikankaāmi,
Nibbisaṃ bhatako yathā.

I yearn neither for death nor for life;
But I look forward to the time (for *parinibbāna*,
death) just as a wage-earner awaits the
time when wages due to him are to be paid.

Unbelievers cast aspersions on Nibbāna bliss by suggesting that those who speak about it are themselves doubtful about its reality. "A

man doing good," they argue, "is said to be able to go to the abode of nats or devas or realize Nibbāna after his demise. If that were so, would it not be better for those men of virtue to kill themselves so that they achieve heavenly bliss as quickly as possible? But the fact is that no one dares give up his life for future happiness. This shows that no one actually believes what he himself preaches." But here, such unkind critics are working on wrong premises. An Arahāt has no desire for the so-called happiness in the next existence after his parinibbāna. In fact, he desires neither death nor life. In that respect he is likened to a wage-earner mentioned in the verse. A wage-earner works not because he loves his job. The only reason why he works is that he is afraid to be out of job. If he is jobless where can he find his where-withal for feeding and clothing himself? So he is careful to keep himself employed, looking forward, however, to his pay-day. In the same manner an Arahāt has no affection either for death or for life. He merely awaits the time of parinibbāna, annihilation of his five aggregates, for, it is only when he achieves it that he will be able to throw down the burden.

Arahats consider the five aggregates of matter, perception, sensation, mental formations and consciousness as heavy burdens. This body has to be cared for and nurtured, clothed and fed.

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It has to be fed not only with food, but also with objects that appeal to its senses. It has to be constantly toned up with *iriyapatha*, the four postures of walking, sitting, standing and lying down. It has to breathe to live. In fact, it has to be given constant attention for its welfare. To the Arahats all such undertakings are burdensome.

Speaking only for an Arahats last existence (preceding the attainment of Nibbāna), he acquires the burden of his aggregates from the time rebirth-linking consciousness arose in him as he was being conceived in his mother's womb. From that time onwards volitional activities begin operating out of which *nāma* and *rūpa* evolve without a break. Rebirth is produced by kamma-actions and defilements inherited from the past. Viewed from his present existence, he is but a product of the past aggregates formed as a result of previous kamma-action and defilements. The further one delves into his past in this manner, the more one discovers the same phenomenon of incessant arising of the aggregates. One may, therefore, never know when "becoming" begins.

Consider which begins first, the egg or the hen, and the mango seed and the mango tree. The hen lays eggs from which are hatched chickens which grow up to be laying hens; and this process goes on *ad infinitum*, and one never

REBIRTH DEPENDENT ON CRAVING

knows which is the progenitor. The same may be applied to the case of the mango and its seed.

Perhaps, one may be able to put forward the view that the hen and the tree are primeval, existing at the very beginning of the world. But when the aggregates of mind and matter are considered, you can never know their beginning. Having borne the burden of the *khandhās* from time immemorial, an Arahāt cherishes but one and only one aspiration, and that is, to throw down the burden of the aggregates off his shoulders when the time for *parinibbāna* arrives.

Worldlings under the domination of defilements have to accept the burden beginning from the moment death-consciousness links up with birth-consciousness time and again throughout the round of rebirths. The burden gains weight and becomes heavier and heavier as the round progresses. With Arahats, as they have no craving for future existence, the seed of desire withers and no new becoming can happen. So the burden is relieved. This is their desideratum

REBIRTH IS DEPENDENT ON CRAVING

Obsessed with craving, all beings have a strong attachment to their present existence. If death can be dispensed with, they would like to live eternally. If that is not possible, they would prefer starting a new life in the literal sense. So they can hardly accept the idea of no-rebirth

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With them, therefore, kamma-actions renew their *khandhās* with birth-consciousness after death-consciousness has run its course. Having no craving for a new existence, an Arahāt desires cessation of his *khandhās*. Desire for a new life is *taṇhā*. Desire for annihilation is *kiriya chanda*, an inoperative consciousness. (Good deeds of Buddhas and Arahats are called *kiriya* because *kamma*, action, is not accumulated by them as they transcend good or evil.) Here please note the difference between *taṇhā* and *chanda*. Craving is active; desire passive; the one for existence, the other for cessation of the round of existence.

NO CRAVING, NO REBIRTH

With Arahats, in the absence of craving, the seed of *Kammaviññāṇa*, consciousness that activates, withers away and dies. Action, moral and immoral is the soil; action-producing consciousness is water and manure. When a person is about to die, he recollects his *kamma* (actions, good or bad), that he has done in his life-time. Again, he may see visions or hear sounds associated with his deeds. He is seeing his *kamma-nimitta*, the sign of actions. In some cases the dying man has visions of signs and symbols that forecast his destiny after his demise. This is *gati-nimitta*, the sign of destiny.

Here, let me add a footnote to elaborate the meaning of *kammaviññāṇa*. It is synonymous with

NO CRAVING NO REBIRTH

abhisankhāravīññāṇa which asserts itself at the dying moment as *maraṇāsaññā javana*, death-impulsion, with its complement of moral or immoral action. It is not impotent like *kiriya citta*. It is active. And so it takes in the sense-objects perceived at the time of death and causes the emergence of *paṭisandhivīññāṇa*, rebirth-linking consciousness, after death. This is in accordance with the Pāli Text which says: "Dependent on kamma-formations or conditioning activities, consciousness arises." *Khammavīññāṇa* has no place for Arahats who, nearing parinibbāna-death, have only *kiriya cittas*, which are functional, not being able to produce any result. When parinibbana-consciousness actually arises, no rebirth-linking consciousness, no *nāma*, and no *rūpa* can come up afresh. It may, therefore, be said that no becoming arises because the seed of *kamma-vīññāṇa* is absent or impotent. This is for the information of those learned in the Pāli Scriptures.

When an Arahāt is about to achieve parinibbāna, he is not troubled by *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta*. Activating consciousness also fails to operate, and, therefore, no kamma-results can rear their heads. Only ineffective *kiriya cittas* associated with his insight meditation come into play. Beyond them there is nothing but death-consciousness pertaining to parinibbāna, on the achievement of which the seed of action

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becomes impotent. There is, therefore, a complete annihilation of existence.

LIKE A FLAME EXTINGUISHED

At one time, at the behest of Buddha, Ānandā recited Ratana Sutta as he went round the city of Vesālī. During the recital the flame of an oil-lamp that was burning went out because the oil had been totally consumed and the wick completely burnt. "Just as this flame is extinguished," observed Ānandā, "all conditioned things have been extinguished (in an Arahāt)." The flame is dependent on the wick and the oil. If the oil-lamp is refilled with a fresh supply of oil and refitted with a new wick, the flame will continue to give light. When a flame is observed closely, it will be seen that the combustion is being continuously supported by the burning oil that is sucked up by the wick. Casual observers notice the whole phenomenon as one continuous process. In the same way, the *khandhās*, generated by *kamma*-action, *citta*, mind, *utu*, season, and *āhāra*, nutriment, are continually renewed, now arising and now passing away. If you want to know this nature, keep note of whatever appears at your six sense-doors as you see, hear, feel or know a sense-object. You will notice that a phenomenon occurs and at once ceases just as it has occurred. When mindfulness gains strength, you will realize the instant passing away of all phenomena of seeing,

hearing, etc. To ordinary folks all these phenomena are continuous. So the *khandhās* are likened to a flame.

As the cessation of the *khandhās* is likened to a flame being extinguished, people who are obsessed with the idea of self usually think and say that an Arahāt as an individual has disappeared. In point of fact an individual has no basis of reality. What we describe, in conventional language, as an individual is, after all, a compound of materiality, *rūpa*, and mentality, *nāma*, that manifest themselves. With Arahats, these compound things become extinct. Cessation does not mean the disappearance of the individual.

If one is rooted in the belief that the individual disappears, then he will be guilty of *uccheda diṭṭhi* or the heretical belief that existence terminates with death. There is, as I have said, no individual. We have only a succession of *rūpa*, and *nāma* now arising, now dissolving. An Arahāt is an epitome of that successive phenomena of arising and dissolution. Beyond the *khandhās*, there is no individual. With Arahats, therefore, cessation means the extinction of the successive rise and fall of the *khandhās*. It is with this extinction in mind that Ānandā made a reference to a flame that was extinguished.

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THE MEANING OF NIBBĀNA

The word *nibbanti*, meaning extinction, occurs in the Ratana Sutta. Etymologically, it is derived from *ni*, a negative prefix, and *va*, meaning craving. It denotes the annihilation of the flames of lust, hatred and ignorance which are the root causes of suffering. The Texts say: *nibbāti vaṭṭadukkham eṭṭati nibbānam*. It means: where the round of sufferings ceases, there is Nibbāna. At the sight of Nibbāna, on the realization of the Path and its fruition as a result of insight-meditation, defilements like craving and ignorance become extinct, thereby giving no opportunity for actions and results of actions to arise in the form of consciousness, *nāma*, *rūpa*, six bases, contact, sensations, etc. New becoming does not occur. This is the extinction of *kilesa vaṭṭa* (defilement), *kamma vaṭṭa* (action) and *vipāka vaṭṭa* (result of action). Here, in this definition, the special quality of Nibbāna is metaphorically used for the location of Nibbāna, but in actuality, Nibbāna has no location.

The texts also say: *nibbāti vaṭṭadukkham etasmiṃ adhigateti vā nibbānam*, which means: When Nibbāna is attained, the round of suffering is annihilated. Here it emphasises that the Path and its fruition are instrumental in bringing about the cessation of suffering. So Nibbāna may also be described as the instrument by which cessation

THE MEANING OF NIBBĀNA

of suffering is achieved. But this is also said in a figurative sense.

The most important point to note is that the nature of Nibbāna is the annihilation of all defilements. With the end of the round of defilement, no new becoming arises, and all is quiescence. Let me lay down a dictum for easy remembrance.

Nibbāna is where rounds of suffering cease.

Nibbāna is instrumental in bringing about the cessation of rounds of suffering.

The very nature of nibbāna is the cessation of rounds of suffering.

For a Vipassanā yogi, defilements become inert only for a moment during the practice of insight-meditation. They cannot be totally uprooted. Total elimination is possible only with the realization of the Noble Path, resulting in Path-consciousness flowing into the stream of annihilation.

Nibbāna is figuratively shown as the abode of cessation of all suffering brought about by defilements. Its nature is also described metaphorically as the very element of quiescence, the result of cessation of suffering. In actuality, Nibbāna is the very nature of the annihilation of all the three rounds of suffering. Its

characteristic, according to the Comentaries, is *santi*, peace and calm.

THE MEANING OF SANTI

Santi also means extinction of all rounds of suffering. Its nature or characteristic is serenity. As all sufferings have been annihilated absolute peace reigns supreme in Nibbāna. I think this much is clear by now. But for a better understanding, I shall elaborate the nature of *vaṭṭas* or rounds.

KILESA VAṬṬA

This round of defilement, according to the Law of Dependent Origination, is set into motion by *avijjā*, ignorance, *taṇhā*, craving and *upādāna*, clinging. The incessant arising of conditioned things like *rūpa*, matter, and *nāma*, mind, at the six-doors is considered as unsatisfactory because of their transient nature. It brings about nothing but *dukkha*, suffering. This realism of the nature of existence is obscured by the machinations of craving; and so the truth remains clouded and not properly grasped. This deviation from truth is *avijjā*, ignorance. Sensual pleasures derived from pleasurable sights and sounds and enjoyable pieces of knowledge are all suffering; but ignorance accepts them as *sukha*, happiness. A person under this delusion thinks to himself, "I exist. He exists. This existence is everlasting." The sense-objects

KAMMA VAṬṬA

he observes appear to him as good and wholesome, appealing to his aesthetic taste. Now that he takes them as wholesome and beautiful, he craves for them; and this craving goads him on to the satisfaction of his desires for them, which, in consequence, produces clinging. His volitional efforts to achieve the objects of his desires lead him to volitional activities and *kammabhava*, becoming, as a result of actions, moral or immoral.

KAMMA VAṬṬA

When the three primary defilements of ignorance, craving and clinging are taken into account, their secondaries like *dosa*, anger, *māna*, pride, and *diṭṭhi*, wrong views, must also be considered. Prompted by craving, *lobha*, greed, asserts itself, Encouraged by greed, an individual makes the utmost exertion to get what he desires by every means at his disposal, When he is not satisfied, anger arises in him. Unrestrained, he scrambles for the object of his desires, playing havoc with the life and property of his fellow-beings. Such an action is accompanied by *moha*, delusion, another form of ignorance which goes well with demerits or *akusala*. So, when one feels angry or greedy, delusion is always there to aggravate the situation. Then consider pride. It makes one think highly of himself. As it brooks no equals, it strives after supremacy. Proud people, obsessed

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with wrong views assert that they are always in the right; and with this attitude they work for the perpetuation of their wrong ideologies either by persuasion or by aggressive propaganda. All these actions stem from the rounds of defilement which brings into play the round of *kamma* or *kamma vaṭṭa*.

Murder, thievery and lying are all immoral actions; while giving alms and practising morality are virtues. Worldlings and even holy personages, barring the Arahats, are subject to the working of the round of defilement; and so, their deeds may be either meritorious or demeritorious. When these volitions during the performance of deeds are conjoined with greed, anger and delusion, *akusala kammās*, evil actions, will produce bad results or demerits. Where these three main defilements are absent, *kusala kammās*, merits, are achieved. Evil deeds point the way to nether worlds, while good deeds to the worlds of men, devas and Brahmas. Ordinarily goodness brings about longevity, good health and material prosperity. If one desires one can even aspire to the Path and its fruition, and ultimately to Nibbāna, through the performance of good deeds. If one wants to avoid being reborn in nether worlds, troubled by bad results of bad actions, one must avoid killing, thieving, etc. If one wants to be born into the worlds of men, devas and Brahmas, and ultimately to

SHUN THE IGNORANT

tread the Path and attain Nibbāna, one must practise charity, morality and mental development. One who aspires to the Path and its fruition, and ultimately nibbāna, must practise vipassanā or insight meditation.

SHUN THE IGNORANT

Now-a-days some of the people who have wrong understanding of the Dhamma preach their wrong views saying that those desiring to end all suffering with no recurrence of rebirths should not practise charity, morality and mental development, for, all these good deeds stem the round of action which is conditioned by the round of defilement of ignorance, craving and clinging. This round of action, in its turn, also brings about rebirth-linking consciousness, mind, matter, six sense-bases, contact, feeling, etc. That being so, it is bootless to do *kusala* or good. Such line of thinking creates deviation in the mind of people of low intelligence. who, taken in by this kind of teaching, stop doing good, not practising charity, not observing precepts, not developing loving-kindness, and last, but not the least, not even performing devotional exercises at pagodas and monasteries. It is said that they are beset by feelings of remorse for having done some good deeds such as alms-giving! For such deviationists, all merits that would have been accumulated for the performance of good deeds will be thrown

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to the winds. But demerits will, sure enough, accumulate with them with the inevitable result that they will go to hell. They will not be able to resist greed, and so they will not hesitate to think evil, speak evil and do evil whenever they make any exertion for the satisfaction of their desires. They will also be hardly able to restrain their anger which arises on the failure to satisfy their desires.

Kusala citta or the mind bent on doing good and *akusala citta* bent on evil do not arise simultaneously; they appear one after the other. When walking, the left leg is raised while the right leg stands firm touching the ground. When the right leg is raised, the left leg stands firm. No two legs go up or down simultaneously. The two *cittas* behave in the same way. While good actions are operating, bad actions remain dormant. But good deeds are invariably the result of voluntary effort; while bad deeds hardly require any special volition. They always come naturally obeying the dictates of greed, anger and the like. Even when one is practising dhamma to suppress them, they rear their heads at the least opportunity. It is, therefore, inevitable that when one abandons *kusala*, *akusala* is sure to gain abundance. The road to nether worlds is wide open for an evil-doer. All things considered, it is because of the wrong views entertained by his mentor that the pupil has

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gone astray. It is for such a misguiding instructor that Buddha has a word in the Mangala sutta: Shun the ignorant fool.

VIPĀKA VAṬṬA

Actions, moral or immoral, produce consequences, good or bad. And so, round of action brings about round of kamma-result known as *vipāka vaṭṭa*. To escape from this round, one should practise charity, morality and mental development, especially mental culture through insight-meditation which will ultimately lead one to the Path of the Worthy Ones. Then rebirth ceases giving no opportunity to the rise of new "becoming", or new *rūpa* and *nāma*.

Vipāka vaṭṭa, therefore, may be defined as the recurrence of *khandhās*, aggregates or conditioned things, as a result of actions moral or immoral.

ROUND AND ROUND

Vaṭṭa simply means going round and round. The round of defilement resolves into the round of action, which in its turn, resolves into the round of kamma-results, and in this manner they revolve in a circle which knows no beginning or end. No one can stop this wheel of *vaṭṭa*. Regarding the nature of actions and their results, it may be easy for an individual to desist from doing good; but he will be utterly unable to resist evil. If you fail to accomplish moral actions, you may be sure that immoral

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actions will get the better of you. Kamma-results produced by meritorious deeds will be highly benefactory to you, for they can send you to the abode of men and devas; but demerits accumulated by evil actions forced upon you by defilements will surely drag you down to hell. If your *kamma* is favourable, you may have the opportunity to associate yourself with men of wisdom and virtue; but if bad *kamma*, that is, ill luck, is at work, you will become a co-traveller with evil elements, and you may continue to commit evil deeds or *akusala kammās* throughout your life. In one's life, one may have done millions and millions of things; but there is only one action which produces result, rendering remaining actions inoperative or ineffective, as one departs from this world.

But these remaining actions or residual *kammās* are retributive; and once one goes down to nether worlds, one would suffer there for eons. If one becomes a *peta*, one shall forever go hungry and thirsty; or one may be burnt alive; or subjected to injuries inflicted by sword or other lethal weapons. One may weep and wail for such sufferings. If one is reborn an animal—a worm, or an insect, or a buffalo, or a bullock, or a horse, or an elephant—one shall face untold miseries; for, in the animal world, the strong victimizes the weak who, in the end, would become a meal for the former. I am

ROUND AND ROUND

recounting these examples to let you know what happens to people acquiring demerits.

Even when favourable *kammas* are at work and one is reborn a man, one cannot escape old age, disease and death which cause grief, lamentation, etc., which are all suffering. If one is unfortunate one may live in poverty in one's new existence. Or, one may be oppressed or victimized by the strong. Or, one may be tempted to commit sin. Then as a result of such evil actions, one may again go down to nether worlds when one dies again. If luck would have it, one may be raised to heaven; but here in heaven too, one may become sad, instead of being glad, as one feels that one's desires are not totally fulfilled. Or, even as a deva, one may become dejected with thoughts of death. Or, if, even as a deva, one forgets the dhamma, in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, one may also go down to nether worlds on one's departure from the world of devas.

There is no way of escape from these three rounds of suffering unless one practises the Eightfold Noble Path enunciated as the middle way by Buddha in Dhamma-cakkapavattana Sutta. This practice is the practice of the development of morality, concentration and wisdom which are the main objects of mental culture that I spoke of earlier in this discourse when I emphasised insight-meditation. The

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yogis of this Sasana Yeiktha are familiar with Satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā which prescribes methods of noting the arising and dissolution of mind and matter as well as sense-bases, contact, sensation, etc. Which are conditioned by *vipāka vaṭṭa* of the present existence.

HOW TO ESCAPE FROM THE THREE ROUNDS

Let me elaborate on this practice of insight-meditation. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking are the works of the six groups of consciousness, namely, eye-consciousness, visual, ear-consciousness, auditory, nose-consciousness, olfactory, tongue-consciousness, gustatory, touch-consciousness, tactile, and mind-consciousness, ideational. Consciousness is invariably accompanied by its concomitant, *cetasika*, which goes into the category of *nāma*. The seat of the sense-organs, the body, is, of course, *rūpa*. When the eye, the object and the base, *āyatana*, meet, contact, *phassa*, is achieved and consequently *vedanā*, feeling or sensation arises. These five resultants of *vipāka vaṭṭa*, namely, *nāma*, *rūpa*, *āyatana*, *phassa*, and *vedanā* belong to the present moment, since they are taking place daily; and if they are not meditated upon with insight-knowledge, craving is developed in accordance with the kind of sensations created, whether pleasurable or not pleasurable. Craving begets clinging. Not being able to note the five resultants of *vipāka* as

ESCAPE FROM THE THREE ROUNDS

they actually are is ignorance, which, together with craving and clinging, constitutes the round of defilement, which gives birth to the round of action, which in its turn produces the round of kamma-results. To prevent the first round, that of defilement, from arising, the working of the round of kamma-result must be observed and noted with the Three Marks of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness or suffering and unsubstantiality, when the absolute reality of conditioned things will dispel all defilements. In the absence of ignorance, craving cannot arise; and in the absence of craving, clinging withers away. Then the round of action ceases operating unable to bring about results. In this manner all the three rounds subside.

Here I would like to quote the following extract from Nidānavagga Samyutta.

Katamo ca bhikkhave lokassa samudayo. Cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇam; tiṇṇam saṅgati phasso; phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccaya tanhā; tanhā paccayā upādānam; upādāna paccayā bhavo; bhava paccayā jāti; jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇam, soka, pariveda, dukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Ayam kho bhikkhave lokassa samudayo.

What, bhikkhus, is the genesis or the origin of this world? Dependent on eye and sense-object, visual consciousness arises. The meeting of the three - eye, object and

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consciousness - - produce contact. Through contact, feeling arises; through feeling, craving; through craving, clinging; through clinging, becoming; through becoming, birth. And birth brings about old age and death attended by sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. And, this, bhikkhus, is how the mass of suffering called the world comes into being.

Thus from the act of seeing, genesis, or the origin of life, and its round of suffering set the whirling of endless births and rebirths in motion. The eye grasps at its object, and vision arises producing a sense of feeling corresponding to what it sees. If this phenomenon is not analysed with insight-knowledge for a proper appraisal of the nature of things, craving will play havoc with your life as you make exertions for the fulfilment of desires by all means. Then kamma-actions induce rebirths that bring miseries of old age and death. This applies *mutatis mutandis* to other sense-bases. And, in this way, *samsāra*, the wheel of existence goes round and round.

ANNIHILATION OF EXISTENCE

How can this cycle of *samsāra* be cut off? I shall tell you about the annihilation of the round of existence, based on the same Nidāna-vagga Samyutta.

ANNIHILATION OF EXISTENCE

Katamo ca bhikkhave lokassa atthaṅgamo; Cakkhuñca paticca rūpa ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam; tiṇṇam sangat phasso; phāssapaccayā vedana; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavīrūgaṇiroduhā upādānaṇiroduho; upādānaṇiroduhā bhavaṇiroduho; bhavaṇiroduhā jātinirodho; jātinirodha jātinirodha jarāmaraṇam, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Eva me tassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti. Ayam kho bhikkhave lokassa atthaṅgamo.

What, bhikkhus, is the annihilation of the world or existence? Dependent on eye and sense-object, visual consciousness arises. The meeting of the three -- eye, object and consciousness -- produces contact. Through contact, feeling arises, and through feeling, craving. That craving is totally annihilated (by the Path of the Worthy Ones) leaving no residue. When craving ceases, clinging also ceases; when clinging ceases, becoming also ceases; when becoming ceases, birth also ceases; when birth ceases old age and death cannot arise. And then sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are obliterated. And, in this manner, all the rounds of suffering come to an end. This, bhikkhus, is how the mass of suffering called the world is annihilated.

From the act of seeing, feeling arises; and when this feeling is properly observed and

noted through insight-meditation, all the three rounds of suffering will be annihilated. For further understanding of the subject I shall quote Sammasa sutta of the same Saṃyutta.

SAMMASA SUTTA

Ye hi keci bhikkhave etarahi samaṇā vā brahmaṇā vā yaṃ loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ; taṃ aniccato passantī; dukkhato anattato rogato bhayato passantī; te taṇhaṃ pajahanti -- upadhiṃ pajahanti -- dukkhaṃ pajahanti; ye dukkhaṃ pajahanti; te parimuccanti jātiyā jarāya maraṇena sokehi parivedehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi; parimuccanti dukkhasmāti vadāmi.

"Presently, bhikkhus, there are some monks or Brahmins who reflect that what appears to be agreeable or delightful is after all *anicca*, impermanence, *dukkha*, suffering, and *anatta*, unsubstantiality, to be regarded as disease, and, therefore, as abhorrent. They abandon craving, and consequently the substrata of being, *upadhi*, and finally eliminate all suffering. They are then released from the hold of rebirth with its attendants, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. And, I say unto you that in this way¹ they are liberated from miseries.

According to this sutta, if one sees an object and reflects on its phenomenon in the light of the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*,

THE STUMP OF A PALM-TREE

craving will be eliminated at that very instant insight-knowledge arises; and then all the three rounds of suffering will be halted. That particular moment of realization is the moment of truth. It is the moment of *tadaṅga nibbāna*, momentary annihilation of all the three rounds of suffering caused by defilement, action and kamma-result.

LIKE UNTO THE STUMP OF A PALM-TREE

As insight-knowledge is developed and as the Path and its fruition are realized, all defilements are exterminated. Then kamma-forces cease to operate and no actions are renewed. So after the parinibbāna-death-consciousness has taken place, the round of *khandhās* comes to a halt. This is called *anupādisesa nibbāna*, that is, nibbāna without the substratum of being (*upadhi*) remaining. It means the aggregates and passions have been totally discarded. It is true that, by the time of the realization of the Path, total cessation has already been effected; but it is not so apparent as when parinibbāna-death occurs. When a palm-tree breaks into two, the upper trunk falls to the ground leaving the lower stump erect. This stump gives the illusion that the tree is intact and alive. When it rots and falls to the ground, the entire tree disappears. An Arahant is like that stump. He has abandoned aggregates and passions by the time he realizes the Path. But the old

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khandhā remains with him; and so the cessation is not intelligible. But with the achievement of *parinibbāna*, he disappears totally just as the stump does. Earlier I gave you the verse recited by Ānandā about the extinction of the aggregates being like a flame extinguished. All these allegories describe how *khandhās* cease.

Having banished all defilements, no miseries or sufferings arise. But as the body has not yet been discarded, the Arahāt may experience physical discomforts which may be construed as material suffering. Kamma-formations continue to do their job inside the material self, and, therefore, sufferings relating to the Arahāt's body are still there. When, however, nibbāna is achieved, peace is with him with its concomitant, coolness.

NIBBĀNA-HAPPINESS

Sariputtarā used to exult, saying, "Brethren! Verily, Nibbāna is happiness! Verily, Nibbāna is happiness!" Kāludayi was not satisfied with this statement, and so he asked, "Where in the world will this happiness be, when in Nibbāna one has neither feelings nor passions?"

Yes, indeed, there is no *vedanā*, feeling in Nibbāna. Then where can happiness be? The elder monk, Kāludayi, rushed in where angels fear to tread, because he was foolish. He was

NIBBĀNA- HAPPINESS

nicknamed Kāludayi, *lālu* being a term for jester.

“Indeed,” replied Sāriputtarā, “in Nibbāna there is neither feeling nor passion; and this absence itself is happiness.”

There are two kinds of happiness, sensual and non-sensual. When six sense-objects supply satisfaction or pleasure, it is called *vedayita sukha*, happiness derived from the sense. In the sensual world, the five pleasures of the sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch are regarded as the best. They do not like to be deprived of them. Those who like chewing betel or smoking are not well-disposed to living in an environment where these luxuries are denied. Gluttons do not like to be born in the world of Brahmas where eating is absolutely unnecessary. In that world there is no differentiation of sex. Absence of sexuality makes the five constituents of sensual pleasures superfluous; but sensuous persons do not like that absence. Where ignorance and craving predominate, Nibbāna is unwanted for lack of sensual pleasures. Kāludayi is one example of the category of those not liking Nibbāna. Sāriputtarā had to admonish him saying that absence of *vedanā* itself is Nibbāna. Peace and happiness not derived from sensual pleasures constitute *avedayita sukha*.

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TRUE BLISS

True bliss is *santi sukha*, bliss of peace and serenity. You may think that sensual pleasures give you happiness; but that is not true happiness. Such pleasures are merely like the satisfaction a smoker derives from smoking. They are also like the pleasures of a man suffering from itches who feels that scratching gives him the sensations of pleasure.

Suppose you are made to enjoy the pleasures of the sights of men and women, handsome and pretty, or of beautiful paintings without a break or rest for a space of one minute or one second, or for one month or for one year. Can you do it? Suppose you are asked to listen to good music all day long, or all month, or all year round. Can you do it? If you are consuming delicacies, can you continue to enjoy them day in and day out? Can you be enjoying all pleasurable contacts indefinitely? If all pleasures are to be enjoyed without rest or sleep, you will surely get bored in the end. Is not rest or sleep a moment of peace that brings true happiness without the interference of sense-objects?

He who is familiar with only sensual pleasures think highly of them. Enjoyment is his *summum bonum*. in Buddha's time a doctrine was current among heretics to the effect that suffering could

JHANIC BLISS

be exterminated during the present state of existence without the extinction of existence. Followers of that doctrine were known as *ditthadhammavādis*. They used to preach: "Enjoy all kinds of sensual pleasures wherever available. This is the ultimate good." This is mentioned in Brahmajāla Sutta. Those who know only *jhanic* or Brahmanic bliss to the exclusion of other kinds of felicity praise it to the skies. In fact Brahma Baka told Buddha that Brahmanic bliss was the most enjoyable.

One would like to think that the kind of victuals obtainable in cities and towns appear to be more delicious than that available in villages. In the same way people would like to think that *jhānic* bliss is better than sensual pleasures. In fact, the kind of bliss attained through the Path and its fruition is better than *jhānic* bliss. Going a step further, nibbāna-bliss is better than the bliss of the Path and its fruition.

FIRST JHĀNIC BLISS IS BETTER THAN HAPPINESS DERIVED FROM SENSUAL PLEASURES

Regarding *jhānic* bliss Sāriputtarā commented as follows, first pointing out the nature of the sensual pleasures:

A visible object gives rise to eye-consciousness, an audible object to ear-consciousness, a smell-object to nose-consciousness, a taste-object

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to tongue-consciousness and a tangible object to touch-consciousness. All these objects of the senses appeal to the mind, generate sense of love or affection, produce sensuality and incite lust. They all go to make the five constituents of sensual pleasures, *kāmaguna*. In the world of the senses those who have the opportunity to enjoy these five constituents feel that they have attained happiness.

On the practice of the first *jhāna*, sensual pleasures are abandoned. He who gains *jhāna* gets absorbed in the *jhāna*-factors of *vitakka*, initial application, *vicāra*, sustained application, *pīti*, rapture, *sukha*, happiness and *ekaggatā*, one-pointedness. The course of the first *jhanic* rapture and happiness flows continuously without interruption unlike the earthy joys of the senses that arise by fits and starts. In the sensual world one may feel happy at one moment and sad at another. But the thrill of the *jhānic* bliss goes on without interruption for some length of time. If, during the period of concentrating on this *jhānic* bliss, a yogi happens to recall sensual pleasures that he enjoyed previous to the absorption, he will be remorseful, suffering mental pain which may be likened to the pain of an old wound receiving a fresh blow. It means that to a yogi entranced in *jhāna*, the very memory of the pleasures of the senses is enough to generate abhorrence and fear. He

DIFFERENT STAGES OF JHANIC BLISS

therefore, looks forward to the attainment of Nibbāna where no *vedanā*, sensation, arises.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF JHANIC BLISS

When one gets absorbed in the second *jhāna* after the first, rapture and joy gain momentum merging into one-pointedness which prevails throughout without any impediment for one or two hours at a stretch. If, by chance, the first *jhāna*-consciousness arises during initial and sustained applications, the yogi concentrating on second *jhāna* would feel painful at the thought of that consciousness as much as one feels painful when a fresh blow is given to an old wound. These remarks apply also to those achieving the third and fourth *jhānas* recalling lesser *jhānas* during their concentration.

It may be shown here that happiness derived from the first *jhāna* far transcends that derived from sensual pleasures, that derived from the second *jhāna* far transcends that derived from the first, that derived from the third far transcends that derived from the second, and that derived from the fourth far transcends that derived from the third. Compared to such *jhānic* happiness, the joy of *arūpa jhāna* is far superior to that enjoyed in the other four ordinary *jhāna* states. The four *arūpa jhānas* are: *Akāśanañcāyatana*, absorptions in the Infinity of Space, *Viññānañcāyatana*, absorptions in the Infinity

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of consciousness, *Akiñcaññāyatana*, absorption in Nothingness and *N'eva saññā n' asaññāyatana*, absorption in neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Each *jhāna* is better than the other. But even in the highest *arupa jhāna*, namely *N'eva saññā N'asaññāyatana*, highly subtle sensations can arise. So nibbāna-happiness where all sensations cease far transcends that which can be encountered in the highest *arūpa* state.

So, Nibbāna bliss is higher and nobler than *jhāna* bliss. Yogis know that rapture and joy experienced at the stage of *sankharūpekkha ñāṇa* far excels those experienced at that of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. When the fruition of the Path is accomplished, rapture and joy experienced at the accomplishment are paramount. Hence we say *avedayita* or *santi sukha* far excels *vedayita sukha*. Those who cannot practise insight-meditation or *jhāna* may be able to appreciate the different grades of happiness now enumerated and come to the conclusion that *santi sukha* is paramount.

They may also come to realize that in the realm of Buddhism, there are far higher ideals which we cannot easily fathom; and this may serve as an impetus to strive after the development of faith in the dhamma.

The teaching of all the Buddhas says that Nibbāna is paramount. It is cessation of all

NIBBĀNA, THE HIGHEST BLISS

vedanās or sensations. In the absence of sensations, peace and coolness reign supreme. All sufferings relating to old age, disease, death and dissolution cease. As it is deathless, its bliss is indestructible. It is, therefore, the highest bliss.

I shall now close with a resume of what I have said. Nibbāna is where the round of suffering ceases. It is also the instrument by which this cessation is brought about. It is the state of annihilation of the round of suffering.

Ignorance, craving and clinging constitute the round of defilement.

Actions perpetrated according to the dictates of the round of defilement constitute the round of action, moral or immoral.

The aggregates that arise at rebirth as a result of meritorious or demeritorious deeds constitute the round of kamma-results.

Happiness derived from contact with the six sense-objects is called *vedayita sukha*.

Peace and calm associated with the absence of sensations arising out of six sense-objects is called *avedayita sukha*.

It is not always opportune to hear a discourse on nibbāna. For the preacher, too, opportunities to deliver such a discourse are few and far between. Buddha in his life time often preached

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Nibbāna Patisammyutta Kathā. This fact is recorded in Udāna Pāli Text and I shall on the next occasion have something to say about it.

May all who have listened to this discourse enjoy Nibbāna bliss which far transcends *vedayita sukha* having realized the Path and its fruition in a short space of time.

Sādhu!

Sādhu!

Sādhu!

PART II.

*(Delivered on the full moon day of Tawthalin, 1323 B.E.,
corresponding to September 21, 1964)*

In my dissertation on Nibbāna, last week, I defined it as the cessation of the three rounds of suffering. Today, I shall attempt at differentiating *sankhāra* from Nibbāna according to the Pali Text, Paṭisambhidā Magga. (*Sankhāra* is a multisignificant term, ordinarily referring to all mental states. It has been variously translated as volitional or conditioning activities, or mental formations or kamma-formations. Here it is applied to all conditioned things which are subject to change -- Translator.)

Sankhāra and Nibbāna

(1) UPPĀDA AND ANUPPĀDA

The Text says: *Uppādo sankhārā; anuppādo nibbānaṃ*. It means that arising is *sankhāra*, and not-arising is Nibbāna.

Meditating yogis know inwardly that every conditioned thing comes up afresh every time

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it gets dissolved. As *sañhhāruppekkha ñāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity towards the five *khandhās* or aggregates, develops, he becomes aware of a state which is beyond the phenomena of arising and passing away. It means that it has gone beyond *saṅkhāra* to come nearer to Nibbāna. *Saṅkhāra* is diametrically opposed to Nibbāna; and the two are incompatible. If one exists, the other disappears. Where there is no arising, there is Nibbāna; and conversely where there is arising, there is no Nibbāna. One can see no light in the darkness, and no darkness in the light.

With sentient beings, *nāma* and *rūpa* renew their states at the time of conception. It happens in this way. Immediately after rebirth-consciousness, *bhavaṅga* (passive consciousness or factor of life) arises. It is from this moment of arising that material phenomena arising from the mind spring up. This process continues and *nāma* and *rūpa* come into being in succession in accordance with the types of consciousness appropriate to the objects perceived. For instance, mind-consciousness occurs when one thinks of an object, and touch-consciousness when one touches it; and through such consciousness is conditioned *nāmarūpa*, mentality-materiality or psycho-physical entity. This "becoming" goes throughout life, after birth has taken place. When this life has run its

PAVATTA AND APAVATTA

course, it is renewed in the next existence and this goes on *ad infinitum*. In other words, formations, influenced jointly or unitedly by *kamma*, moral or immoral types of consciousness, *citta*, mind, *utu*, climatic conditions and *āhāra*, nutriment, are termed *sankhāra* which can be perceived by insight-knowledge. After repeated meditational exercises, a yogi will experience that his consciousness, without prompting, flows on like a stream into the region of *non esse*. That moment of realization of the cessation is the moment of nibbāna-bliss which makes itself felt through the knowledge of the Path and its fruition.

(2) PAVATTA AND APPAVATTA

The Text says: *Pavattam sankhārā; āppavattam nibbānam*. It means: occurrence is *sankhāra*, and non-occurrence is *nibbāna*. *Pavatti* strictly means a course of existence between rebirth-consciousness and death-consciousness.

Nāma and *rūpa* are constantly formed through the process of arising and passing away and they flow like a stream. When an object of mind or an object of sense enters this stream, other types of consciousness, such as mind-consciousness or touch-consciousness occur, as stated before, appropriate to the objects perceived. Conditioned things are formed in this way and life-continuum goes on like a running stream.

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That being so, worldlings think that the continuous mass of mentality-materiality exists without suffering any change. They think that their bodies that they see now at the present moment are the same as that existed when they were young. From such notions arises attachment to self and to the idea of permanence of self. Owing to this attachment realities are not appreciated. When they experience the onset of pleasurable sensations assailing their minds, they mistake them for happiness. Not being able to grasp the ultimate truth about the nature of conditioned things like *nāma* and *rūpa*, they are led to believe in *nicca*, permanence, *sukha*, happiness, and *atta*, self.

The meditating yogi knows through insight the process of formation and dissolution of conditioned things. So his conviction in impermanence stands firm. He also realizes that what is impermanent is unsatisfactory, and what is unsatisfactory is suffering. He sees no "I" in any phenomenon. As he notes the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, he perceives that this round of formation and dissolution is endless. What he thus sees with the aid of insight-meditation is *pavatta*. Concentrating his mind on it incessantly, he arrives at *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity, when he is inclined to the element of peace where the stream of *nāma* and *rūpa* ceases to

NIMITTA AND ANIMITTA

flow. As nothing occurs at this stage, it is called *apavatta*. That moment when this knowledge blooms forth through the consciousness of the Path and its fruition is the moment of truth when the yogi becomes at one with Nibbāna.

(3) NIMITTA AND ANIMITTA

The Text says: *Nimittam sañkhāra; animittam nibbānam*. It means: the presence of signs (of conditioned things or sentient existence) is *sañkhāra*; and absence of those signs is nibbāna. In other words, Nibbāna is signless.

Those not given to insight-meditation believe that the objects that they see have definite shapes or forms or dimensions. Even the meditating yogi thinks so in the beginning of his meditational exercises. In accordance with the rules of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, he may be noting the fact that he is walking as he walks, but he cannot shake off his awareness that, in the process of walking, his leg is being lifted and that his body is moving. He feels the sensation of movement of his form, the body. Similarly when he is noting the rising and falling of his abdomen, he is always reminded of the shape and form of his abdomen. It means that he is aware of the signs of the presence of conditioned things which are subject to change. These signs are *sañkhāra*.

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However, when he attains a higher stage of insight-knowledge, he is only aware of *vāyo*, the element of motion, which arises and then disappears. He now gains the conviction that all is impermanent. In this way he arrives at *bhaṅga ñāṇa*, knowledge of dissolution of conditioned things.

SIGNLESSNESS FELT THROUGH BHAṅGA ÑĀṆA

Visuddhi Magga has this to say:

Nāne tikkhe vahante saṅkhāresu lahuṃ upaṭṭhahantesu uppādaṃ vā thitiṃ vā pavattaṃ vā nimittaṃ vā na sammapunāti, khaya vā bheda nirodhe yeva sati santiṭṭhati.

When his knowledge works keenly, formations become quickly apparent. Then he no longer extends his mindfulness to their arising or presence or occurrence or sign but brings it to bear only on their cessation as destruction, fall and break-up.

(This translation is by bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli in his "The Path of Purification," published by R. Semage, Colombo, 1956.)

When the yogi's knowledge is rendered sharp with the practice of meditation, the act of noting and recognizing the object under observation is quickened so much so that, when he becomes aware of the formations, *saṅkhāra*, he

THREE THOUGHT-MOMENTS

could extend his mindfulness only to the cessation of the phenomenon. This happens in this way.

Each thought-moment of consciousness has three instants, namely, *uppādi* (arising or genesis) as the beginning, *thīti*, (static state or development) as the intermediate, and *bhaṅga* (cessation or dissolution) as the end of the phenomenon of consciousness that takes place.

Before the practice of insight-meditation, the yogi is not conscious of these three instants of the thought-moments. To him, therefore, all forms, conventional concepts and signs indicate that every phenomenon takes place as one continuous chain of events. He thinks that events flow like a stream without a break. When he starts developing the foremost step in meditation, namely, *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*, knowledge arrived at by dissecting mind and body into their ultimate parts, his notions of continuity dwindle to a certain extent. When *sammāsaṇa ñāṇa* is developed in him, he gains the knowledge of the arisings and ceasings of the past, present and future events as *uppāda*, *thīti* and *bhaṅga*. But even then he thinks that they are durable since they are concatenated. When *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, knowledge of the rise and fall of aggregates, is realized, he is sware of the beginning, *uppāda*, and end, *bhaṅga*, of the

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thought-moment, the actual occurrence, *pavatta*, the intermediate instant, being not apparent. When *bhanga nāṇa*, knowledge of dissolution, is realized, the signs of *saṅkhāra* relating to arising and development subside leaving only dissolution or cessation for the yogi to notice. But it does not mean that he is now in sight of Nibbāna. He has been enabled to recognize *saṅkhāra* only with the application of the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. It is only when he attains *saṅkhārupekkha nāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity towards all conditioned things, that he is able to cultivate indifference to all signs that indicate formations or *saṅkhāra*, namely, arising, development and cessation. When, finally, he reflects with *paccavekkhaṇa nāṇa*, knowledge of self-appreciation, on the Path, its fruition, passions already destroyed, passions to be further destroyed and Nibbāna, then he arrives at the ultimate stage where all signs of *saṅkhāra* disappear.

NIBBĀNA: ITS CHARACTERISTICS.
FUNCTIONS AND MANIFESTATIONS.

Commentaries describe Nibbāna by its characteristics, functions and manifestations. The characteristic of Nibbāna is peace, its function deathlessness and its manifestation signlessness. Insight into signlessness can be achieved only through the knowledge of the Path

NIBBĀNA IS FORMLESS

and its fruition aided by the knowledge of self-appreciation, *paccavekkhaṇa ñāṇa*. As Noble Ones reflect on the Path and its fruition the absence of form, conventional concept and sign becomes apparent.

NIBBĀNA IS FORMLESS

In Milinda Pañhā, Nāgasena thera told King Milinda that there is nothing that can be equated with Nibbāna. It has no shape or form, no size, and no dimension. It cannot be perceived by reasoning, or by disputation, or by metaphorical presentation. It is beyond compare. It is neither white nor black, nor bright nor dark, nor big nor small. Nibbāna is the cessation of the three rounds of defilement, action and action-result. Writing in 1305 B.E. (1937) I said in my "Insight-Meditation" by way of introduction:

Nibbāna is not a mansion or a palace. It is no city. It is not light. There is no luminescence in Nibbāna. It has no element of lucidity and coolness. Mansions, palaces, cities, light, luminescence, lucidity and coolness are not unconditioned, *asaṅkhata*, or ultimate realities, *paramattha*.

I wrote that piece objectively without intending to impugn anything to anybody. But later

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I found a book which represents Nibbāna as an expanse of luminosity. Readers might think that I was writing a tirade against the writer of that book. But no! I wrote without any thought of it. I now repeat the words of Milinda Pañhā when I say that Nibbāna is Formless. A yogi concentrating on it with *saṅkhārūpekkha ñāṇa* (knowledge of equanimity), *anuloma ñāṇa* (knowledge of adaptation) and *gotrabhū ñāṇa* (knowledge of overcoming worldly lineage with Nibbāna as its object) will get lost in the stream of consciousness which acknowledges the cessation of all *saṅkhāras*. At this stage, both the noting mind and the object noted appear to be dissolving.

(4) ĀYŪHANĀ AND ANĀYŪHANĀ

The Text says: *Āyūhanā saṅkhārā; anāyūhanā nibbānaṃ*. It means accumulation (of actions) is *saṅkhāra* and non-accumulation is Nibbāna. Grammatical connotation of *āyūhanā* is "constructing or assembling," as in constructing a house where the builder assembles materials in an appropriate manner. Efforts to accumulate actions constitute *saṅkhāra*. Where such efforts are wanting, there you will find Nibbāna.

As *saṅkhāra*'s function is to accumulate, its characteristic is formation, which may be either passive or active. Where formation is conditioned

by the four composite factors of the so-called being, namely, kammic force, mind, climate and nutriment, it is passive. *Nāma* and *rūpa* are subjected to these four factors. It is with reference to this *nāmarūpa* that we say all *saṅkhāras* are impermanent, unsatisfactory and unsubstantial. *Cetasika* is concomitant of consciousness, and it is also called *saṅkhārakkhandhā*, mental formation. When it operates to cause mental, verbal or physical conduct, the characteristic of *saṅkhāra* is said to be active. *Cetanā* is volition which is a component of *cetasika*. It produces *vipāka*, result, either good or bad, in conformity with the mental, verbal and physical actions performed meritoriously or demeritoriously. *Kusala* or *akusala kammās* arise in this manner, and it is this *kamma* that is active *saṅkhāra* that causes the renewal of existence after the old *khandhās* have passed away. Where *cetanā* fails to occur, no new *nāma* and *rūpa* arise.

But, as shown previously, in the absence of defilements, actions become mainly functional and ineffective. Defilements are eliminated when the Path and its fruition are reached through insight-meditation. Freed from the influence of *kilesas*, past *kammās* are rendered effete, and they are utterly unable to bring about the formation of a new existence. With Arahats all *khandhās* cease together with all passions; and this state of Nibbāna is known as *anupādisesā*.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

KAMMA-ACTIONS DO NOT CEASE WITHOUT EXERTION

It has been suggested that *anāyūhanā* is the opposite of making exertions to accumulate actions that bring about kamma-formations. If this is not seen in its proper light, it may be misinterpreted that one should make no effort to accumulate actions. What is meant here is that in the absence of defilements, actions cannot accumulate, and that, therefore, meritorious deeds appear to be superfluous with reference to the Arahats. You should not run away with the idea that if you do not do anything, there will be no *kammic* force, and therefore, no *kamma*-result. That may be possible, but impracticable. Certain elements wrongly interpret the Texts and say, "All efforts lead to suffering. Making no effort is cessation, and is, therefore, Nibbāna. Alms-giving, practising morality and meditating for mental development are superfluous. Keep the mind inert. This leads to Nibbāna." In 1952, When I came to Rangoon, I heard over the radio such teachings which might please those who have no mind to exert in the practice of the dhamma. Such teachings are contrary to what Buddha taught. In the Pitakas it has been said that all *akusala* (malevolence) should be shunned and that charity, morality and mental development must be practised. Nowhere has it been said that no *kusala*

FLESH IS PRONE TO EVIL

(benevolence) should be done! Without the accumulation of good deeds, bad *kamma* can never be obviated.

THE FLESH IS PRONE TO EVIL

Doing good needs faith, willingness and effort. It is difficult of achievement. To accomplish it is like going against the tide. Evil, however, can be easily done, for to commit them no special effort or impetus is necessary. It goes naturally. Therefore we say that an evil-doer drifts with the tide. When law and prudence intervene, *akusala*, bad actions, are checked to a certain extent. For ordinary worldlings there are only two things to choose -- to do good, *kusala kamma*, or to do evil, *akusala kamma*. For so long as good deeds remain undone, evil will predominate. If, for every hundred minutes, ninety minutes are devoted to the execution of evil by *akusala citta*, malevolent mind, there will be only ten minutes left for *kusala citta*, benevolent mind, to work its way. If this bare ten minutes of good deeds are to be abandoned, evil will get the better of you for fully a hundred minutes.

A person not practising *bhāvanā*, mental discipline, has no way of knowing how to put evil in restraint. For, in the face of various objects that give pleasure to the senses, how can an ordinary man control his mind not to get

attached to sensual pleasures? He will forever be pleased with what desirable objects that he sees or hears.

A family man hardly exercises restraint in the fulfilment of his family's desires and wants, and he will go any length to realize it. A single man, without the ties of marriage, will also be unable to resist the temptation offered by pleasurable sense-objects. Since he has all the privileges of enjoying what is there to be enjoyed, he would not care to control his passions of greed, anger and ignorance. He is sure to let off his anger if he encounters any objects which he regards as undesirable. There is the story of an uncle and a nephew regarding mind-control. The younger man used to say, "Leave the mind alone. By giving it the reins, it can keep out *kilesā* of its own accord." The elder man seemed to get disgusted with such wisecracks and gave his nephew a slap on the cheek. When asked why he did so, the uncle explained that he was testing the truth of the statement made. The young man, needless to say, became very angry. Anger can be discarded only when Arahantship is attained through the practice of insight-meditation.

In Buddha's time, Sāriputtarā was known for his calmness. He was never angry. A brahmin, not believing in the elder's conquest of passions, came up to him from behind and gave him a

KUSALA AND AKUSALA

blow Sāriputtarā, however, moved on unperturbed. Then only did the brahmin realize his mistake, and made apologies. An Arahāt possesses equanimity through the extermination of all passions like anger, etc., with the practice of insight-meditation which brings forth Path-consciousness.

When you see disgusting things can you control your mind so that you do not feel revolting, sad, dejected or troubled? Without the practice of insight-meditation you can never know how to control the mind.

WHERE KUSALA IS WANTING, AKUSALA DOMINATES

Where *kusala* is not practised, *akusala* prevails. If one practises charity, morality and mental development, one can be comfortably reborn in the world of men or devas, even though one may not have aspired to the Path and its fruition. In the latter predicament of not having been able to realize the Path, if one practises mental development wherever one is reborn, one can in the end tread the Path. But if one neglects doing good, unable to accumulate goodness, one's bad actions will lead to results appropriate to what one has done, and one will suffer for them. One may even go to nether worlds. Hence instructions not to practise good must be viewed with apprehension. That is the reason why I always insist on all and sundry to do meritorious deeds.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Let me repeat here that *anāyūhanā* does not mean to shun doing good. It only means that it abandons *kusala* or *akusala* that gives rise to rebirth-consciousness. Good actions help to develop *bhava ñāṇa*, knowledge of dissolving things as fearful, *ādinava ñāṇa*, knowledge of fearful things as baneful and *nibbāna ñāṇa*, knowledge of baneful things as disgusting.

ARAHATS NEVER ABANDON KUSALA KAMMAS

Freed of all defilements like greed, anger and ignorance, Arahats never commit evil deeds. That is quite obvious. Questions may arise, however, whether merits can be accumulated with them for their *kusala kammās*, good actions. As I have earlier explained, they do accumulate merit for their practice of charity, morality, concentration, insight-meditation, loving-kindness doing obeisance to Buddha; but since defilements are absent, such good deeds produce no results. It may be remembered that in Namakāra Devotional Verse Buddha is described as having renounced both *kusala* and *akusala kammās* for he has eliminated the rounds of defilement and action. Arahats can also eliminate them. But unlike Buddha they cannot do away with *vāsanā*, impression of the past good or bad actions remaining on the mind. Here, in the Devotional verse renunciation of *kusala kammās* means That actions are rendered ineffective.

PAṬISANDHI AND APPAṬISANDHI

because defilements have been exterminated by means of Path-consciousness.

For worldling actions, moral or immoral, both past and present, produce results in the form of rebirth-linking. In this way sentient beings go through innumerable existence. For so long as *khandhās* continue to arise, suffering is endless.

(5) PAṬISANDHI AND APPAṬISANDHI

Of this rebirth-linking, Patisambhidā Magga has this to say: *Paṭisaṇḍhi saṅkhārā; appaṭisaṇḍhi nibbānam*. It means rebirth-linking is saṅkhara; absence of rebirth-linking is Nibbāna.

Rebirth-linking is so called because it links across the gap separating the end of the former existence from the beginning of the next existence. Past existence becomes linked with the present existence *ad infinitum* for so long as the law of actions is working. This linking brings about life in nether worlds, or in *petā* world, or in animal world, or, for that matter in other worlds as well. To be born again and again in the abodes of suffering just mentioned is horrible indeed. Unless one gains Arahantship, one will be lost in the round of existence. Even *sotāpannas* will have to go for seven rounds in the sphere of the senses. A *sakadāgāmi* has two existences to go. An *anāgāmi* shall roam about in *sud dhavāsa* plane where he is destined to attain

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Arahatship. For the rest all will be in the realm of defilement that paves the way to endless rebirths. But, as I have said, with Arahats all the three rounds of action, defilement and result of action cease. This is *appaṭisandhi*, the characteristic of Nibbāna. It may, therefore, be said that Nibbāna is Unborn.

Those who have developed *bhaya*, *ādinava* and *nibbidā ñāṇas* usually suffers from ennui becoming disgusted with the round of sufferings, having realized the truth through Path-consciousness. Looking forward to Nibbāna, they practise insight-meditation to eliminate defilements and tread the Path. This is the realization of Nibbāna itself; but as the substrata of existence have not yet been discarded, it is called *saupadisesa nibbāna* in contradistinction to *anupadisesa nibbāna*, where no aggregates remain after the extirpation of all passions.

(The passages dealing with two *nibbāna* elements, being a repetition, are not translated in extenso. See Part I.)

THREE LOADS

We are all carrying heavy loads -- the load of *kilesā*, the load of *abhisankhāra* and the load of *khandhā*.

A. KILESA LOAD

Kilesā, defilement, embraces all passions such as greed, anger and ignorance or delusion. It

ABHISAÑKHĀRA—LOAD

imposes a heavy burden on us - - a burden of sins, for man is prone to committing murder, thievery, etc., at the dictates of his passions. Evil deeds cause suffering.

B. ĀBHISAÑKHĀRA-LOAD

Accumulation of actions, moral or immoral, performed by an individual, is *abhisankhāra*, which is another name for kamma-formations. It is also a heavy load. When actions performed are evil, they lead the evil-doer to worlds of suffering like hell. When an individual is reborn in happy conditions, as in heaven, as a result of moral actions, he will still be troubled with old age, disease and death. Whether he is satisfied with his kamma-results or not, he cannot get away from these three undesirable conditions. So he carries his load of actions, willy-nilly, unable to avoid the round of suffering. Even when he is reborn a man, he may be so reborn in wretched poverty, afflicted with disease and troubled with ill-health. Even though he may have good kamma-results awaiting him, he may not have the opportunity to enjoy these results if bad kamma overtakes him afterwards. He will as usual be forced to put up with miseries. In real life, it may be possible for him to avoid punishment for his crimes. If he has a good lawyer to plead for him, he may come out of the case an innocent man. In extenuating circumstances, he may bribe for his

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

freedom. And then, there is amnesty to save him. But with *kamma* there is no escape from the law of retribution. It may be lying dormant for eons in the course of the rounds of existence, but when it discovers an opportunity to rear its head, it will make its presence felt. Heavy, therefore, is the load of actions and action-results!

There is only one way to abandon the *abhisankhāra*-load; and that is for the yogi to practise insight-meditation. If he attains the state of a *sotāpanna*, all unprofitable actions cease; and he can never go down to nether worlds. If he attains Arahatsip, all the loads will be lifted off his shoulders, and no new "becoming" will arise. But before a Worthy One enters the state of *parinibbāna*, the past bad *kammas* can take their effects. It is said that even Buddhas cannot evade *vipākas* or *kamma*-results, or the results of residual bad actions (inherited, as if it were, from former existences.)

C. KHANDHĀ—LOAD

Because of the *abhisankhāra*-load, the *khandhā*-load has to be carried from existence to existence. New *khandhās* arise as a consequence of the past old *khandhās*. They are very active, constantly moving about, walking, sitting, standing or lying down. They have to be fed.

UNLOADING ALL BURDENS

cleansed and clothed. They like pleasure and so they have to be appeased with objects that give them pleasurable sensations. In an attempt to fulfil their desires, one is compelled to do things which are sinful. When a crime is committed, it affects only the environment that surrounds the criminal, and that is the end of it. But when an immoral act is committed, it worries the sinner throughout the endless rounds of existence. To escape from them he will have to accumulate good actions with the development of good perception, good formation and good consciousness. When one gets old, one feels the heavy burden. He learns that it has to be carried not for one brief moment but for life, nay, for the entire *samsāra*, without any respite, without any limit of weight or distance or time. I have told you elsewhere about the rounds of defilement, of action and of action-result. In essence, these three rounds, have a bearing on the three loads that I am talking about.

To sum up, all defilements of the mind like greed, anger and ignorance constitute the load of *kilesā*, all moral or immoral actions constitute the load of *abhisankhārā*, and all the five aggregates constitute the load of *khandhās*.

UNLOADING ALL BURDENS

Since Arahats have eliminated all defilements through Path-consciousness, they succeed in

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

laying down the burden of *kilesā*; and that being so, their past *kammas* are rendered ineffective after their *parinibbāna*. That is to say past *kammas* can no longer create new "becoming" for them. But during their life time, they continue to give results for their actions. Commentaries say that Buddha was affluent in his day because of his past good *kammas*. But he was accused of being immoral by Sundari, the female ascetic, because his past *vipāka* (action-result) was working against him at that time. With Sivali thera, bountifulness was his hall-mark, because he was generous in giving alms in his previous existences. With Lokasatissa poverty and want troubled him always because of his past *kamma* of niggardliness.

THE CORD OF EXISTENCE

Arahats are often described as holy men with no burden on their shoulders. Their accomplishment is the realization of the fruits of the Path. With them the cord of existence has been severed. In modern parlance we use the expression: cutting the chains. But with Arahats it is more than cutting the chains of human bondage. *Samyojana*, the bond of human passion which entangles man to endless round of existence, is entirely cut off by Arahats. Freed from this chain of existence, it is no longer necessary for them to be born anew. A man negligent of the dhamma fails to cut

THE CORD OF EXISTENCE

off the chain of existence which could, at one time or another, drag him down to four nether worlds if his *kammas* prove bad. Hence the Dhammapada says, "A worldling negligent of the dhamma makes four nether worlds his permanent residence."

Men live in their own houses. If circumstances compel them to visit other people's houses, they might stay there for a while as guests and return to their own houses. In the same way, when their permanent address is hell, they might, once in a while, pay a visit to higher planes of existence to come back to their rightful place. Sometimes, people born unto this world as men or women go up to the sphere of the Brahmas by dint of their good *kammas*. But the cord of sensual existence drags him down to the human abode. So they die as Brahmas to be reborn as men or women in this world.

When a tether is short the bullock cannot roam about beyond what the tether allows. In the same way a man tethered to a cord of narrow confines of existence cannot go beyond those confines. When his cord of existence allows him to roam about only in form sphere or formless sphere, he will never be able to go beyond the limits to approach Nibbāna. Hence he continues to live in misery, suffering, old

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

age, ill-health and death. But Arahats know that they have cut off the cord of existence once and for all.

FIVE FACULTIES OF THE SENSES

Arahats are praised for their achievement in the extermination of *āsava*, canker, and *kilesā*, defilement. (*Āsava* is almost synonymous with *kilesā*. They are latent in all worldlings to rise as depravities to the surface as soon as opportunity arises). Like all sentient beings, Arahats possess faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching since all sense-bases are situated in their physical bodies. As these sense-bases remain unimpaired with them, they can see, hear, smell, taste or touch the sense-objects and differentiate which among them is good or bad. In matters of five faculties of the senses, they are like ordinary human beings because they cannot as yet do away with *vedanā*, sensation. They know what misery is like and what happiness is like. But since they have discarded defilements like anger, etc., they do not feel unhappy, although, of course, they may recognize physical discomfort as such. Conditioned by seasonal changes, they may feel hot or cold. They may feel fit or unfit according to their conditions of health. When objects of sense are not pleasing, they may feel awkward physically, but mentally they are

CESSATION OF LUST

indifferent. They have virtually no interest in pleasure or pain. No greed, nor anger nor ignorance arise in him on account of the pleasurable sensations created by sense-objects.

CESSATION OF LUST

In the Arahāt, *rāga*, lust, has ceased arising, and so are anger and ignorance. He sees, eye-consciousness arises; he knows, but he has no feelings of lust, anger and ignorance. All passions are spent with him. This cessation of passions is *saupādisesa nibbāna*, annihilation of the flames of lust, anger and ignorance with the substrata of being remaining.

Once the Path is realized an Arahāt enjoys *saupādisesa nibbāna* till he enters *parinibbāna*. He is absolutely happy in that state because he has discarded all suffering caused by the round of defilement. But the body -- the aggregates -- still remain with him, and this for one or two thousand cycles in the case of those who realized the Path while in the plane of the Brahmas. This is good in a way, because in that world physical suffering and unpleasant objects are non-existent. But for those who realized the Path in this human world, he will have to put up with the ills that the flesh is heir to, for instance, the drudgery of making daily rounds for food, washing the face or taking bath daily, etc. In this way he, although an Arahāt, has

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to carry the burden of the aggregates in spite of the fact that he has no attachment for them.

Bakula therā, who gained pre-eminence as the healthiest among Buddha's disciples, lived to be 160, becoming an Arahāt at the age of 80 and dying, that is, entering *parinibbāna*, 80 years after. That means that he carried the load of his *khandhās* for 160 years becoming liberated from the shackles of the aggregates as well as human passions only after *parinibbāna*. But he neither wished for long life nor for death. I told you last week that an Arahāt neither yearns for life nor for death although he eagerly awaits *parinibbāna*.

ANUPĀDISESA NIBBĀNA

Anupādisesa nibbāna is the annihilation of passions together with the aggregates. Thus it has been expounded in Itivuttaka. It says it is the attainment by a noble bhikkhu who is worthy of respect and homage earned by dint of his abandonment of canker and defilement, having practised all there is to be practised, having accomplished all there is to be accomplished, having laid down the burden of *khandhās*, having cut off the cord of existence, having been emancipated through knowledge fully-acquired, having rejected *vedanā*, sensation, as not delight-

ANUPADISESA NIBBĀNA

ful, and, finally, having gained peace and tranquility during his life-time.

The important point to note here is that *vedanā* ceases with the *parinibbāna* of the Arahāt. For worldlings, and even for trained yogis, it cannot be discarded. They are wont to accept it as delightful, and, therefore, there arises in them an attachment to it. Being attached to *vedanā*, they take it on even at the moment of death-consciousness. It, therefore, flows on, as if it were, and comes up together with the arising of rebirth-linking consciousness. Consequently new becoming arises. But with the Arahāt the cessation of *vedanā* has been initiated in his life-time. It may be remembered that an analogy has been drawn from the dying out of a flame with regard to that cessation. This dying out started in his life-time. Since *vedanā* has thus been smouldered, there is no opportunity for becoming to rear its head after his *parinibbāna*.

What has been said about *vedanā* applies *mutatis mutandis* to *saññā*, perception, *saṅkhāra*, mental formations, and *viññāṇa*, consciousness, which all cease as *vedanā* ceases. Together with *rūpa*, matter, they all constitute *khandhā* depending on which *vipāka*, result of actions, comes into being. With the negation of *khandhā* and *vipāka*, annihilation is finally accomplished by the Arahāt without the strata of existence remaining.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

TWO NOTEWORTHY VERSES

Regarding the two elements of Nibbāna, there are two *gāthas* (verses) taken from Itivuttaka, which are worthy of note.

*Duve imā cakkhumatā pakāsitā,
Nibbānadhātū anissitena tādina;
Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā,
Saupādisesā bhavanettisaṅkhayā.
Anupādtsesā pana samparāyikā,
Yamhi nirujjhanti bhavāni sabbaso.*

*Ye etadaññāya padam asaṅkhatam,
Vimuttacittā bhavanettisaṅkhayā;
Te dhammasārādhigamā khaye ratā,
Pahamsu te sabbabhavāni tādino.*

Without dependence (on wrong views created by craving), in full possession of equanimity (towards sense-objects, pleasant or unpleasant), and in exercise of the eye of Wisdom, Buddha has clearly shown the two elements of Nibbāna. One element, *saupādisesa Nibbāna*, is the cessation of defilements with the substrata of existence remaining, and it is quite apparent here and now. It signifies the severance of the cord of existence.

Anupādisesa Nibbāna becomes apparent only after *parinibbāna*. In this element, annihila-

TWO NOTEWORTHY VERSES

tion of becoming is complete. Knowing these two elements as Unformed or Uncreated by virtue of Path-consciousness, the Arahats are emancipated from being subjected to becoming. Having realized the essence of the dhamma, and having achieved equanimity towards all sense-objects, good or bad, they delight in the extinction of formations.

In my last lecture *anupādisesa Nibbāna* was shown as an abode where the element of peace resides. This is said figuratively. For it has no location. Neither is it a cause nor an effect. In the Commentaries, *saupādisesa Nibbāna* is shown as the destruction and absence of *rāga*, lust, without indicating any location, or cause or effect.

(All repetitions here are left out or condensed. Only a gist is given in translating other passages.)

It will not be strictly proper to say that the Path and its fruition inclining towards their objective, Nibbāna, is the cause and the cessation of defilements in the two elements is the effect. It may also be noted that Peace to which the Path and its fruition are inclined is ordinary Nibbāna and the two elements now under review are extraordinary Nibbāna. Both of them are one and the same possessing *santi*, one of the characteristics of Nibbāna.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Nibbāna is timeless. And so it will be equally improper to ask if the Path, at the moment of cessation of defilements, inclines towards Nibbāna in the very course of its establishment, that is, in the present time, or whether it looks forward to the future Nibbāna with its annihilation of *khandhās* after the Arahāt's *parinibbāna*. But here Nibbāna is *kālavimutti*, beyond the concept of time. Consider *anussayas*, inclinations that contribute to the formation of lust, anger and ignorance. Worldlings possess them in abundance. They arise when conditions are favourable. They cannot be assigned to the past, or present or future. Since they are timeless, their cessation is also timeless.

Consider also the phenomenon of cessation. It is neither a happening nor an arising. You cannot say that it arose, or it is arising, or it will arise. It has no relation to time. Hence, strictly speaking, we do not say that cessation has completed. It comes along with the moment when Path-consciousness occurs. When defilements cease, the *khandhās*, dependent on them, lose the opportunity to arise. The phenomenon in this instance is *kālavimutti*. It is of no avail, therefore, to ask whether Path-consciousness inclines to the present or to the future.

Where the round of *upāda*, genesis, *thiti*, static, and *bhaṅga*, cessation, is operating, the best dhamma is concentration and meditation on the

ANUPĀDISESA NIBBĀNA

fruition of the Path. When the Absolute is arrived at with the disappearance of these three instants of the thought moment, Nibbāna is realized. It is the highest stage. When Arahats arose from the meditation of Nibbāna during the attainment of the fruits of the Paths, they used to express their delight as follows:

*Susukham vata nibbānam , sammāsambuddhā
desitam ;
Asokam vira jam, khemaṃ yattha dukkham nirujjhati.*

All sufferings are exterminated at Nibbāna where there is no sorrow, no passion and no danger. Blissful indeed is Nibbāna shown by the All-enlightened.

Arahats, therefore, are inclined towards this blissful state of *anupādisesa nibbāna* where all matter, mind and mental formations become extinct. Since they do away with the round of suffering, no becoming arises.

May all who have listened with respectful attention to this discourse on Nibbāna attain it in a short space of time through the consciousness of the Path and its fruition.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

PART III.

*(Delivered on the full moon day of Tawthalin, 1326 B.E.
corresponding to September 29, 1964).*

Having explained the two elements of Nibbāna I shall resume this discourse with the Hymn of Triumph uttered by Buddha on the occasion when Bāhiyadārucīriya, the Worthy One, entered *anupādisesa nibbāna*.

THE HYMN

*Yattha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati;
Na tattha sukkā jotanti, adicca nappakāsati;
Na tattha candimā bhāti, tamo tattha na vijjati
Yadā ca attanā vedi, muni monena brāhmano;
Atha rūpā arūpā ca, sukhadukkhā pamuccati.*

In the realm of Nibbāna, there is no primary element of water, earth, heat and cold, or air. There no star shines, no sun illumines and no moon brightens. And, yet, darkness is absent.

A sage comes to know Nibbāna by his own effort as he gets enlightened through acquiring the knowledge of the Path, and, ultimately becomes an Arahāt. He is then liberated from matter and non-matter, or from happiness and misery

STORY OF BĀHIYADĀRUCIRIYA

Dependent on the four *dhātus*, primary elements, of earth (solidity), water (fluidity), heat and cold (temperature) and air (motive force), matter arises causing attachment to sense-objects like forms and sounds. When those elements become extinct, matter dissolves into nothingness. It is absent in Nibbāna. Where there is no matter there can be no light or darkness.

I have repeatedly stressed the point that Nibbāna has no foothold anywhere, because it is impossible to locate where the cessation of the arising of mind and matter takes place. In one sutta it has been expressly stated that Nibbāna knows no abode. In another it has been mentioned that in this one-fathom long body the four Truths have been proclaimed. The Abhidhammā, however, says that Nibbāna is extraneous to the body. You will find the explanations when later I deal with internal (subjective) and external (objective) sense-bases or *āyatanas*.

Matter exists in Form Spheres, and mind in Formless Spheres. But *parinibbāna* delivers an Arahāt from the dominance of mind and matter. So we speak of the *parinibbāna* of Bāhiyadāruciriyā as deliverance from the round of suffering.

THE STORY OF BĀHIYADĀRUCIRIYA

In the time of Buddha, a merchant, by the name of Bāhiya, sailed the seven seas for trading. He was successful in all his previous

ventures; but on the last occasion, his ship-wrecked. All sailors and men got drowned and he alone was saved. He was lashed to the shores of Supparaka landing place. Having been tossed about in the sea, he lost all his clothes. When he got to the dry land, he made for himself a girdle of leaves stitched together with small sticks. He seized a begging bowl from a shrine, and with it he went round the village for alms-food. By the girdle he wore, the residents of the place mistook him for an Arahāt and offered him food and clothing. But Bāhiya thought to himself that if he donned the clothes offered him, public esteem towards him as an Arahāt would be shattered. So he stuck to his girdle for a dress. The people continued to revere him as an Arahāt, and, as such, his fame spread far and wide. In course of time, he himself came to believe that he was really an Arahāt.

At that time there was a Brahma, an *anāgāmi* (non-returner), in the abode of Brahmas, and he knew Bāhiya's precedents. He came down to earth, and, approaching Bāhiya, told the truth—that the latter was no Arahāt and that he was practising no dhamma worthy of an Arahāt.

"Bāhiya!" the Brahma said, "you were one of the seven of us who practised the dhamma during the time of Buddha Kassapa. Of the

STORY OF BĀHIYADĀRUCIRIYA

seven I was the eldest, now reborn an *anāgāmi* in this world of the Brahmas. In those days your faith in the dhamma was so intense that when you were offered food by Arahats you refused it lest it would hamper in the way of realization of the dhamma. Now you have become an imposter, well-pleased with what affluence you have achieved through deception. You are no Arahats, possessing no moral qualities that belong to an Arahats."

Bāhiya, on hearing this, became greatly mortified and requested the Brahma to guide him to the presence of an Arahats, if there were one. The latter told him that Buddha, a true Arahats, was residing at that time in the Jetavana monastery at Sāvattthi.

(Pages 124, 125 and 126 are not translated as they are irrelevant.)

Bāhiya went to the monastery as directed, and when he got there Buddha was not there having gone to town for a round of alms. But he at once followed Buddha where he was, and when he met the Blessed One, he made the request to preach. But his request was refused, for the time and occasion were inappropriate. But Bāhiya insisted and made the request three times. Buddha forbore this in the end and gave him the following advice, which has been incorporated in Bāhiya sutta.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

JUST SEE AS YOU SEE IT

In Bāhiya Sutta, the following occurs:

Tasmātiha te Bāhiya evaṃ sikkhitabbam, “Diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissatī” ti; evañhi te Bāhiya sikkhitabbam.

Bāhiya, since you insist, I now enjoin you to practise this: when you see, you just see it; when you hear, you just hear it; when you know, you just know it; and when you think, you just think it. You must practise this way of cognizing the phenomenon just as it occurs.

This is the vipassanā method known as *diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ* (Just see as you see it, and nothing more.) There are six sense-doors through which six sense-bases perceive their respective six sense-objects. Here, for the sake of brevity, only four examples of perception are given. When a man sees an object, he does not leave seeing alone. He does not stop at seeing. He does not *just* see it. He goes further than that and dwells his mind on things incidental to the act of seeing, for instance, on the shape and form of the thing seen, weighing in his mind whether it is desirable or repugnant and feeling sensations of pain or pleasure reacting according to its nature. Of course he is pleased when it gives

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him pleasure; but when he sees what he considers as ugliness, he becomes not only disconcerted, but also disgusted and angry. Even when he is indifferent to it, the fact still remains that ego-entity has arisen in him. "I see it," he thinks; and that "I" appears to him as permanent. If he *just* sees it and notes that he has seen it, without ruminating on the nature of the subject that sees it, the object that is seen and the incidents of seeing, that would have been merely *just* seeing. But to see a thing and stop at seeing it is not easy of accomplishment. If you fail to recognize only the act of seeing for the sake of seeing, you cannot help taking cognizance of the individual or the thing that you see, thinking in your mind whether he or it is agreeable to you or not. If you like what you see, affection will grow; but if you do not, hatred will gnaw your heart. Even when you are indifferent to whomever you see, you would have already cultivated in your mind the idea of individuality and permanence of that individuality. You will find it difficult to break yourself away from this notion of ego-entity. It is only through the practice of insight-meditation that you will rightly know how to see *just* only what you see and nothing more.

Without practising insight-meditation, it will not be possible for a layman to stop short at hearing when he hears, at smelling when he

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smells, at tasting when he tastes and at touching when he touches. The most difficult to achieve is to stop at thinking as he thinks. It is therefore advised that he notes continually the phenomenon as it happens. In the beginning it is almost impossible for him to note all the phenomena of seeing, hearing etc. So begin with one particular phenomenon as you practise meditation. In the teaching of Satipaṭṭhāna, it has been laid down that one should note walking as one walks. This is watching the phenomenon of movement, the working of *vāyo*, the element of motion. When you stand up, note that you are standing up; when you sit down, note that you are sitting down. During such moments you may experience some tangible things happening in your body. Note them. As for us we recommend you to watch the rising and falling of the abdomen as you take up meditation.

As you are observing the rising and falling of the abdomen in conformity with the method of meditating practice, your mind may wander, and you will start thinking this and that. Note what you are thinking about. At times, as you meditate, you may feel tired, or hot and stuffy or painful. Note these sensations too. As you feel tired, you may improve your posture. Note every movement that you make as you seek comfort. As you are meditating you may hear extraneous sounds, which must also be noted

JUST SEE AS YOU SEE IT

as they arise. Briefly put, you must note your own behaviour, both physical and mental, together with sensations that you feel. When there is nothing to note in particular, concentrate your mind on your belly as in the beginning.

As concentration develops you will find that, when you see, seeing is momentarily established just to get dissolved the next moment. The same may be said of the phenomena of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. As you note the act of hearing, both the sound and the perception of the sound disappear. When you feel hurt, both the infliction causing hurt and the feeling of pain disappear. You concentrate on seeing, noting inwardly what you know as seeing. Subsequently, seeing, noting and knowing get dissolved. Then knowledge will arise in you that what arises passes away, and that, therefore, the phenomenon of seeing is impermanent. This knowledge of the transitory nature of things is *aniccānupassanā ñāṇa*. What arises only to get dissolved is not satisfactory; and therefore this phenomenon is, after all, *dukkha*, suffering. This knowledge of the realization of the truth relating to suffering is *dukkhānupassanā ñāṇa*. Further, *anattānupassanā ñāṇa*, knowledge of the realization of the unsubstantial nature of things, is also developed as you get convinced that it is in the nature of things just to happen of their own accord.

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Bāhiya, having been endowed with *pārami*, perfections, gained insight as he listened to what Buddha taught him. When he saw an object, he noted just what he saw and did nothing more. As he watched the phenomenon as it happened, nothing arose in his mind beyond the fact that he saw. He did not, as he watched the phenomenon, think to himself, "I see it. This is my self who is seeing it." As his mind got freed from clinging, egoistic pride and wrong views, together with the notion of self, were dispelled.

Buddha further told him:

Tato tvaṃ bāhiya nevidha na huraṃ ubhaya-
mantarena, esevanto dukkhassa.

Bāhiya! When no attachment occurs as you see, neither this world nor other worlds will be with you. The fact that existence is thus negated delivers you from the round of suffering. In that state you reach the ultimate - - Nibbāna.

Once bereft of clinging, egoistic pride and wrong views, all defilements cease. Where defilements are absent, existence itself, whether in the present or in the future, may be said to have become extinct. Not-becoming means the end of suffering which is *anupādisesa nibbāna*.

Here commentaries in *Udāna aṭṭhakathā* are more-
elicting. There are six pairs of *āyatana*s, sense—

BĀHIYA BECAME AN ARAHAT

bases, consisting of six sense-organs, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, grouped as internal, and six sense-objects, namely, form, sound, odour, taste, contact and ideas, grouped as external. When one gets detached from such defilements as clinging and the like through the development of insight-knowledge, one gets also detached from both the internal (subjective) and external (objective) sense-bases. You or your "self" no longer abide in the mind-door, sense-object and consciousness. This cessation of the functions of these sense-bases is Nibbāna itself.

This agrees with the actual experience of the meditating yogi. In the early stages of the *vipassanā* practice, he has to bend his mind on the mind-door, sense-object and consciousness to note the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. He is all the time aware of the rise and fall of aggregates. When his insight-knowledge matures, his mind flows, as if it were, into the cessation of all phenomena of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching and knowing, when he is said to have come face to face with Nibbāna.

BĀHIYA BECAME AN ARAHAT

While Bāhiya was listening to the teaching of Buddha, he became an Arahāt. When the Enlightened One resumed his way for his usual

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round of alms, Bāhiya went in search of clothings discarded by others so that they could be converted into a monk's robe, for, he had by now intended to get ordained. But, unfortunately, a cow tending her calves attacked him. He died on the spot.

When Buddha returned to his monastery, he found the body of the Arahāt, Bāhiya. He caused it to be cremated in a fitting manner and told his disciples to erect a *cetiya* (pagoda) in his memory. The monk at the monastery asked Buddha where Bāhiya could be reborn. Buddha replied that he had become an arahāt before he died, and that, therefore, he had entered *parinibbāna*, uttering the *gāthā* cited earlier with reference to Nibbāna where four primary elements are non-existent.

Commentaries say that Bāhiya died as he was gored by a cow who was a woman in one of its previous existences. He wronged the woman, robbing and raping her; and she died swearing vengeance on him. She was reborn an ogress many a time, and he, a man to be killed by her.

Thus he had died many a death in the hands of the ogress. His unwholesome deeds followed him like a shadow, causing untold miseries often in the nether worlds. It was all as a result of his bad *kamma*. Had he not attained Arahātship

THE EYE AND VISUAL PERCEPTION

after meeting Buddha, he would continue to suffer by his foul deeds. But, now, although his death was caused by a cow in the manner described, all suffering ceased with him on his attainment of Nibbāna where no aggregates arise. Buddha, therefore, looked upon his death as a triumph. In fact he honoured the deceased as the most preeminent among his disciples in the matter of gaining supernormal powers in the quickest possible time.

THE EYE AND VISUAL PERCEPTION

Salāyatana Saṃyutta has this to say:

*Tasmātiha bhikkhave se āyatane veditabbe,
Yattha cakkhu ca nirujjhati, rūpasaññā ca niruj-
jhati, se āyatane veditabbe.*

O bhikkhus! You should cultivate knowledge of the mind-base bent on Nibbāna, where the eye, the visual organ, and the form, the sense-object perceived by the eye, cease together. This cessation (of the origin of visual perception) is Nibbāna itself.

Thus said Buddha regarding the cessation of the twin *āyatana*, the sense-organ and the sense-object. This is how Nibbāna is realized through meditating the phenomenon of seeing. When

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a yogi is watchful over the rising and falling of the abdomen, or over the physical movement of sitting or standing, or over the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., during his meditational exercises, he will become aware of the dissolution process. If so, knowledge of dissolution, *bhaṅga'ñāṇa*, becomes developed in him. From the point of view of the subject who sees, there is absolutely nothing for him to say, "It is I," or "I exist." And from the point of view of the object that is seen, there is nothing to show, "It is a thing. It is an individual." Thus one cannot find anything worthy of attachment. As this fact is being meditated upon, one gets to *saṅkhārūppekkha'ñāṇa*, awareness of the states of mind and body and of mental formations. Eventually he will become aware of the cessation of all aggregates. When this stage is reached, you might even feel that all matter in your body has disappeared. That is why it is said: "*Cakkhu ca nirujjhati*," which means that the organ of seeing ceases (to function). On meditating further, you will notice that the form, the mind and the perception, all relating to the phenomenon of seeing, have been swept away to nonentity. The relevant quotation is "*Rūpasāññā ca nirujjhati*," meaning that the visual perception of form ceases (to arise). All in all this denotes cessation of the sense-base and the sense-object. Once these twin *āyatana*s cease, Nibbāna may be said to be in sight.

THE EAR AND AUDITORY PERCEPTION

THE EAR AND AUDITORY PERCEPTION

Yattha sotañca nirujjhati, saddasaññā ca nirujjhati, se āyatane veditabbe.

In Nibbāna the organ of hearing ceases, and so does auditory perception. Be it noted that this cessation of the *āyatanas* of the sense-organ and sense-object relating to hearing is Nibbāna.

As *saṅkhārūpekkha ñāṇa* is developed, when you hear a sound, you happen to note it; and as soon as you have noted it, you become aware of the dissolution of the aggregates of mind, matter and mental formations. At this stage you feel that your whole body, with its organs of hearing, disappears altogether. It is as if you do not hear the sense-object, and that therefore, you are not cognisant of it.

THE NOSE AND OLFACTORY PERCEPTION

Yattha ghānañca nirujjhati, gandhasaññā ca nirujjhati, se āyatane veditabbe.

In Nibbāna the organ of smelling ceases, and so does olfactory perception. Be it noted that this cessation of the *āyatanas* of the sense-organ and the sense-object relating to odour is Nibbāna.

When *saṅkharūpekkha ñāṇa* is developed, you will sense the smell as you get it. As you go on meditating on it, a stage will be reached when

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you become aware of the cessation of mind, matter and mental formations. The entire process of olfactory perception seems to disappear altogether as you note it.

THE TONGUE AND GUSTATORY PERCEPTION

*Yattha jivhā ca nirujjhati, rasasaññā ca nirujjhati,
se āyatane veditabbe.*

In Nibbāna the organ of tasting ceases, and so does gustatory perception. Be it noted that this cessation of the *āyatanas* of the sense-organ and sense-object relating to taste is Nibbāna.

When *sankhārūpekkha ñāṇa* is developed, the meditating yogi may note the taste of the food he is eating; and from this he proceeds to the stage when he realizes how the aggregates of mind, matter and mental formations cease.

Commentaries mention innumerable instances of monks attaining Arahantship as they meditated on the taste of the rice-gruel that they were taking. As they took it with mindfulness, they were aware of the passing away of the aggregates of mind, matter and mental formations.

THE BODY AND TACTILE PERCEPTION

THE BODY AND TACTILE PERCEPTION

Yattha kāyo ca nirujjhati, phoṭṭhabbasaññā ca nirujjhati, se āyatane veditabbe.

In Nibbāna the body possessing the sense of touch ceases, and so does tactile perception. Be it noted that this cessation of the *āyatanas* of the body and bodily impressions is Nibbāna.

For a meditating yogi, the body is the sense-object which has to be watched most of the time. When *saṅkhārūpekkhā ñāṇa* is developed as you are noting the body that gives tactile perception, you become aware of the dissolution of mind, matter and mental formations, and the act of noting the phenomenon disappears altogether.

THE MIND AND PERCEPTION OF IDEAS

Yattha mano ca nirujjhati, dhammāsaññā ca nirujjhati, se āyatane veditabbe.

In Nibbāna the mind together with perception of ideas ceases. Be it noted that this cessation of the *āyatanas* of mind-base and mind-object is Nibbāna.

This is the discovery of Nibbāna through the perception of the mind. Possibly, this discovery can be the most frequent. When *saṅkhārūpekkhā ñāṇa* is developed gross sense-objects disappear, subtler ones taking their place, as a yogi notes

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the arising and passing away of the phenomenon. Here he comes to think that his whole body vanishes with only perception remaining. For, as he notes the rising and falling of his abdomen, that rising and falling disappear, and he becomes aware only of the fact that he is perceiving the rising and falling. Concentrating on this, mind, matter and mental formations cease. This awareness of the cessation is Nibbāna.

CESSATION OF ĀYATANAS IS NIBBĀNA

To sum up, the cessation of *āyatanas* is Nibbāna. In the commentary on Pañcattaya sutta, the negation of the six pairs of *āyatanas* has been shown as Nibbāna. Ānandā confirmed this by saying that according to Buddha, Nibbāna means the cessation of the six organs of sense and six sense_bases—meaning, of course, the cessation of their operations. Dependent on the internal *āyatanas* of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind notions of ego-entity arise, and then we say that, this is an individual, this is a man, and this is a woman. When these egoistical ideas are dispelled, peace is established with the cessation of suffering relating to aging and death. The cessation of external *āyatanas* of form, sound, odour, taste, contact and ideas are only secondary to the extermination of suffering; but as they are the adjuncts of the internal *āyatanas*, it is only when they cease that others follow suit. Negation of these pairs of *āyatanas* is Nibbāna.

FIXING THE MIND ON NIBBĀNA

FIXING THE MIND ON NIBBĀNA

In Milinda Pañhā, there is a passage dealing with directing attention to Nibbāna.

*Tassa taṃ cittaṃ aparāparaṃ manasikaroto pavat-
taṃ samatikkamitvā appavattaṃ okkamati, appavat-
tamanuppatto mahārāja sammāpatipanno nibbānaṃ
sacchikarotīti vuccati.*

The yogi who, again and again, fixes his mind (on a mind-object) crosses the stream of occurrence over to the state of non-occurrence.

O King! If he, who has thus arrived at the state of non-occurrence, practises in the right way, he may be said to have come face to face with Nibbāna.

As the meditating yogi becomes aware of the dissolution of things as he observes their rise and fall, a sense of disgust assails him and he begins to develop the desire to abandon them. *Nāma* and *rūpa* that arise and pass away flow on like a stream continuously without end. As he concentrates on this flow, he becomes just perceptive to it automatically. He does not go beyond this perceptive stage. Later he becomes indifferent to it, because, by now, he has developed *saṅkhārūpekkha ñāṇa*. Concentrating further on the phenomenon, he discovers that

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the mind that perceives and the object that is perceived arrive at cessation together. This is transition from occurrence to non-occurrence. You may recall to mind what I said elsewhere in relation to Nibbāna: what occurs is *sankhāra*; and what does not occur is Nibbāna.

RIGHT METHOD OF PRACTICE

Nāgasena thera enjoined King Milinda to practise in the right way which is herein explained.

Anyone aspiring to Nibbāna must first and foremost achieve *sīla visuddhi*, purity of morality. A layman must at least observe the five precepts and *ājīvaṭṭhamaka sīla*, propriety of conduct. (This relates to practising Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Right speech can be developed through abstaining from tale-bearing, harsh language and vain talk. Right Action is accomplished through abstaining from killing, stealing and committing sexual impropriety. Right Livelihood means the right way of living.) Having achieved this, *citta visuddhi*, purity of mind, must be practised through concentration or *jhāna* (absorptions). If a man has developed perfection, he may practise the first, second, third and fourth *jhānas* progressively. On the attainment of *jhāna*, *nivaraṇas*, hindrances, will be removed. Hindrances to progress are sensuous desire, hatred,

RIGHT METHOD OF PRACTICE

sloth and torpor, restlessness and brooding and doubt. After the realization of *jhāna*, he must practise insight-meditation.

Even when a yogi cannot aspire to *jhāna*, he must bend his efforts to get possession of *upacāra samādhi*, proximate concentration. Even when he cannot practise this, he should begin with the exercise of concentrating his mind on the four primary elements, or the 18 material qualities of matter, or the 12 external and internal sense-bases, or the five aggregates, or least of all, the two aspects of *nāmarūpa*, mentality - materiality. According to Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, he should concentrate on the four postures, on the physical behaviour caused by the four elements of earth, air, water and heat and cold, on sensations, on mind, etc. The text says, "When you go, know that you go." In this manner you note to know that you are standing when you stand and that you are sitting when you sit. Then the mind will not wander. It gets stuck up, as if it were, to the object noted. Then you should know that you have achieved purity of mind when all hindrances get removed. This stage is recognized as *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi*, a kind of mindfulness established momentarily, which is as good as arriving at proximate concentration. Briefly put, purity of mind means a state of mind unhampered by lowly conduct and defilements.

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A yogi accomplished in purity of mind notes the rise and fall of *nāma* and *rūpa* in relation to the three marks of *anicca*, impermanence, *dukkha*, suffering, and *anatta*, unsubstantiality. He meditates: "Matter is not permanent; sensation is not permanent, etc."

Then he gets bored and disgusted with all these *nāma* and *rūpa*. When he becomes detached from mind, matter and mental formations in all sincerity, he has no craving for them. Becoming weary with life, he gets disgusted with it, abandons all desires, and finally achieves emancipation. Now the Path is fruitified.

Paṭisambhidā Magga mentions many stages of insight-knowledge that should be progressively realized by a yogi practising meditation.

But those who are loth to practise insight-meditation or to encourage others practising it make statements which should never be made. They used to say, "Now that we know the unsatisfactory nature of kamma-formations, practising meditation is unnecessary or superfluous. If you concentrate on suffering, you will be confronted with suffering. If you let the mind go, all is done. You need not take the trouble of noting it." Such an advice contradicts the doctrine laid down by Buddha. What do these advisors really know? Their knowledge of formations as suffering is super-

SENSE OF DISGUST

ficial. They cannot go deep into absolute realities. If they truly realize what *dukkha* is, they are bound to get disgusted with it and they will certainly try to get away from it. They assert that they know *dukkha*, but they do not actually feel that *nāma* and *rūpa* are unsatisfactory. Ennui cannot be developed in their minds. So they do not actually feel disgusted with conditioned things. They have no desire to abandon them. In fact they would like to embrace and accept them.

SENSE OF DISGUST

Knowledge of baneful things as disgusting is *Nibbidā ñāṇa*. This sense of disgust is described in the commentaries with the analogy of a fisherman who catches fish with an open-ended trap. When he thinks that a fish has been caught, he puts his hand into the trap and takes it out. But he discovers that he has caught a snake with three circular marks around its neck. Realizing that he has made the greatest mistake in his life, he gets disgusted with himself and feels repugnant to the poisonous reptile. Three times he waves it over his head and finally flings it away with all his might.

Those who regard the aggregates of *nāma* and *rūpa* as highly desirable are very much like that fisherman who caught the snake in his hands. Before knowing what he had caught,

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he was overjoyed, but when he discovered it with three circular marks around its neck, he got terribly frightened. As a yogi notes the rise and fall of aggregates, he will be reminded of the three marks of impermanence, suffering and unsubstantiality, and as he applies them to the phenomenon on which he is meditating, he comes to the realization that all conditioned things are baneful and disgusting. No ordinary worldling can regard his own body of *khandhās* as very much like a snake. The mere knowledge of its resemblance to a loathsome creature will not be enough to make him disgusted with his own body. One must be truly convinced of the reality of human suffering in the abstract.

It is only when a yogi gains insight into the real nature of mind and matter that he feels repugnant to them and considers all attachment as useless and empty. Eventually he develops indifference to the rise and fall of aggregates to arrive at *saṅkhārūpekkha ñāṇa*, when all formations can be looked upon with an equanimity of mind. In the beginning one has to make special effort to come to this stage of knowledge, but with continued practice equanimity arises naturally as soon as he contemplates on the rise and fall of conditioned things. When you have acquired that knowledge, you feel that you at once become cognisant of the phenomena, but you are not affected by them, whether they are agreeable or

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pleasing or not. No attachment arises in your mind when it dwells on pleasurable objects. Neither will you be disconcerted by disagreeable things. You have now developed stoicism in the manner of Arahats. At this stage of mental development, there may be occasions when your mind would like to roam about leaving the object of concentration behind, but as you gain experience your mind would refuse to get away from the object on which it dwells.

With this right method of practising insight-meditation, you proceed from *saṅkhārūpekkha ñāṇa* to *anuloma ñāṇa*, when you gain adaptive knowledge in preparation for the realization of the four Noble Truths. Peace is established once you have discarded the state of occurrence to get to its opposite end, non-occurrence.

Nibbāna cannot be seen with the naked eye. It can be seen inwardly as the cessation of all phenomena.

As a result of your listening to this discourse with respectful attention, may you be able to practise the right way to meditation on the cessation of all suffering caused by the mind-door, sense-objects and consciousness, becoming liberated from the shackles of the six pairs of sense-bases to reach the ultimate stage where the continual flow of *nāma* and *rūpa* is forever halted !

Sādhu ! Sādhu ! Sādhu !

PART IV

(Delivered on the 15th waning of Tawthalin, 1326 B. E. corresponding to October 6, 1964).

Nibbāna, cessation of lust and hatred, is the very antithesis of defilement. The term, "*saṅkhāra-nirodho*," meaning the end of all mental or *kamma*-formations, is applied to Nibbāna. It is, therefore, in direct opposition to *saṅkhāra*. When the nature of Nibbāna is expounded, it is but fitting that *kilesā*, defilement, and *saṅkhāra*, mental formations, should also be explained. Tonight I shall attempt at giving you the explanation.

RESPECTFUL ATTENTION

When Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvattthi, he used to preach Nibbāna to his disciples in the evening in the ante-room of his perfumed chamber. About this the scriptures have this to say.

The monks pricked up their ears while listening to the Dhamma, with a sincere desire to be intellectually benefitted, and with such mindfulness and concentration that focus attention only on one object.

AN ATTENTIVE SPIRIT

I urge the audience to listen to this discourse in the manner of the monks who paid respectful attention to Buddha's teaching, all minds concentrating on the dhamma.

THE ATTENTIVENESS OF A FEMALE SPIRIT

Once, as Buddha was preaching, a female *yakkha* or spirit, wandered near the monastery with her offsprings in search of food. Although *yakkhas* are classified as deities, their status is very low. They have no proper abode. They are never adequately clothed or fed. Punabba-sumātā -- for, that is the name of the female spirit -- was accompanied by her daughter Uttarā and her son Punabbasu.

When she got to the main gate leading to the monastery, all was quiet. She thought there might be alms-giving and entered the building in the hope of getting something to eat.

When she got as far as the altar, she found herself amidst a congregation of monks and laymen listening to Buddha's sermon. As he preached in a mellifluous voice, she listened to him with rapt attention, completely enthralled. But her children were so beset with hunger, that they could not remain quiet. "Mother! Give us food!" they cried.

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"My dears!" entreated Punabbasumātā, "Please be quiet while the Great Teacher of men and devas is preaching the dhamma. He is discussing Nibbāna which severs all chains of suffering. My love and devotion to Nibbāna have grown in me exceedingly."

Nibbāna is cessation of suffering. When, therefore, one is afflicted with sorrow and misery, one yearns for Nibbāna. That is natural. When a man is in the best of health, he is not interested in medicine. Under healthy conditions he does not consider the subject of health as important. But when he gets older and becomes sick, he ruminates on the benefits of health. As he wants to get his sickness cured, he now listens with respectful attention to well-wishers prescribing medicine for him.

In much the same way Punabbasumātā listened to Buddha's discourse on Nibbāna. She might be suffering at this moment from intense hunger; and as she was destitute she had to be begging for herself and her children. Born into this sensual world, she bore children who must needs be looked after. But being subjected to untold misery and suffering, she yearned for Nibbāna. She told her children that she loved them, but she emphasised that her love and devotion for Nibbāna was greater than her maternal love.

THE YAKKHA BECOMES SOTAPANNA

*Piyo loke sako putto,
Piyo loke sako pati,
Tato piyatarā mayham,
Assa dhamassa magganā.*

It is the way of the world to love one's son and to love one's husband. But I love searching for the dhamma more than loving them.

For, love for my son and for my husband cannot extricate me from suffering. Only by listening to the dhamma can I get liberated from the round of suffering.

Devout mothers do generally pay respectful attention to preaching; but they are harassed by their crying children. But the children of this female *yakkha* appeared to be docile and obedient. They listened to Buddha's sermon well and respectfully after they had been chastised by their mother.

Buddha foresaw that both the mother and the children would become *sotāpannas*, stream-winners, after they had heard the dhamma. So he preached the Four Noble Truths. Punabbasumātā and her son became *sotāpannas* accordingly.

As she became a stream-winner, her life changed completely. She was forthwith transformed into a decent deity, beautiful, well-clothed and well-fed. Uttarā, her daughter, was too young to understand the dhamma; albeit she

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profited from her mother's accumulation of merit.

ABOUT THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

In the Pāli canon of Udāna the following passage occurs relating to what Buddha uttered in triumph in relation to the nature of Nibbāna. This utterance has been incorporated into the Canon as Nibbāna-paṭisaṃyutta Udāna.

Atthi bhikkhave tadāyatanaṃ; yattha neva pathavī na āpo, na tejo, na vāyo, na ākāśānañcāyatanaṃ, na viññāṇaṇcāyatanaṃ, na ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ. na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ; nāyaṃ loko na para loko; na ubho candimasūtiyā; tatrāpāhaṃ bhikkhave neva āgatiṃ vadāmi, na gatiṃ, na ṭhitiṃ, na cutiṃ, na upapattiṃ; appaṭiṭṭhaṃ appavattaṃ nārammaṇamevetāṃ; esevento dukkhassa.

O bhikkhus! Nibbāna to which six sense-bases are inclined is real. But it has no elements of earth, water, fire and air. It is neither the realm of Infinity of Space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*), nor the realm of Infinity of Consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatana*), nor the realm of Nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), nor the realm of Neither Perception nor Not Perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). It denotes neither this world nor other worlds. No moon nor sun shines there. I never maintain that in Nibbāna there are goings and comings. It has no foothold or residence. It is Deathless, Uuborn and Un-

NIBBĀNA IS REAL

formed. It has no abode. Nothing ever occurs there. It has no sense-objects. It is the end of suffering.

NIBBĀNA IS REAL

Since Nibbāna means the cessation of mind, matter and mental formations, suggestions have been often put forward that it signifies nothing, and it, therefore, useless. But Nibbāna is absolute reality, the reality of the nullification of the activities of mind, matter and formations to which the knowledge of *magga* (Path), *phala* (Fruition of the Path) and *paccavekkhana* (self-examination) is inclined. It is the mind-object to which this knowledge is directed. Buddhas, Arahats and Nobles Ones vouch for the truth of its reality. For the sake of argument, let us say that there is no Nibbāna where all the rounds of defilement, action and action-result cease. Then no one in this Universe can find peace. In the absence of Nibbāna, defilement will play havoc with our lives to produce action, which will bring about action-result, which will create conditions for the rise of a new body of *khandhās* attended by suffering. It is only the Path and its Fruition that can exterminate defilement, and this extermination will put the round of suffering to an end. This cessation of suffering is real. Buddhas and Arahats actually reach this stage of reality, and after their *parinibbāna* all sufferings come to an end.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

NO PRIMARY ELEMENTS IN NIBBĀNA

In Nibbāna there are no element of earth or solidity, no element of water or fluidity, no element of fire or thermal energy and no element of air or motive force, that can usually be met with in the world of the Senses, such as the world of men and devas, or in the world of Form, such as the world of corporeal Brahmas etc. Possessing solidity, men, devas and Brahmas assume shapes and forms. Cessation means the end of such shapes and forms that possess mass. In the absence of mass, there are no elements of fluidity, thermal energy and motive force.

MATTER NON-EXISTENT IN NIBBĀNA

In the absence of the four primary elements there can be no *upādā rūpa*, or matter formed by these four elements, for instance, the eye and the eye-object, the ear and the ear-object etc. Since they are absent there will be no phenomena of seeing, hearing etc. which occur in Sense Sphere as sense-sphere consciousness and in Form Sphere as form-shpere consciousness.

Consider this. Without eyes one cannot see; without ears one cannot hear; without nose one cannot smell; without tongue one cannot taste; and without body one cannot get the sensation of touch. *Pasāda rūpas* are the seats of sensa-

ABSENCE OF MIND

tion or the five sense organs which form the bases of consciousness. Devoid of the organs of sense, consciousness cannot arise. In the world of the Brahmas, *cakkhu pasāda* (eye-basis) and *sota pasāda* (ear-basis) only are extant, *ghāna pasāda* (nose basis), *jivhā pasāda* (tongue basis) and *kāya pasāda* (body-basis) being absent. So Brahmas may possess noses and tongues in rudimentary forms or bodies or masses in great dimensions, but they do not know what smell is, what taste is and what bodily impression is. But there is *hadaya vatthu*, seat of consciousness usually called heart-basis, in all sentient beings, whether of human or deva or Brahma world. So in these three worlds, thought, knowledge and absorptions of *jhāna* can occur.

ABSENCE OF MIND DEPENDANT ON MATTER

As I have said, as there are no primary elements in Nibbāna, all *rūpas* or matter dependent on these four elements are non-existent. Because of the absence of these *rūpas*, there are no *cittas* (mind or consciousness) appertaining to *kāmāvacara*, the realm of the senses, or to *rūpāvacara*, the realm of Form—as, for instance, the first *jhānic* consciousness. For brevity's sake I discuss only about *citta* or mind, but whenever *citta* is mentioned one must remember its concomitant, *cetasika*.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Now the question arises whether in Nibbāna there are still extant *cittas* or consciousness that arise without depending on *rūpa* or matter as, for example, *arūpāvacara* consciousness.

ABSENCE OF ARŪPĀVACARA CITTA

Here, the Text is also very explicit about the absence of Formless Sphere, *arūpāvacara*, in Nibbāna, whether it be consciousness appertaining to the abode of the Infinity of Space (*Ākāsānañcāyatana*), or to the abode of the Infinity of Consciousness (*Viññānañcāyatana*), or to the abode of Nothingness (*Akiñcaññāyatana*), or to the abode of Neither Perception nor Not, Perception (*Neva-saññānāsaññāyatana*). In the realm of the Infinity of Space, rebirth-linking begins with the advent of *vipāka citta*, consciousness relating to action—result, *citta*, mind, and *cetasika*, its concomitant. Normally for worldlings, during the course of existence between rebirth—linking and death, wholesome (*kusala*) or unwholesome (*akusala*) consciousness, together with their concomitants arise. When such worldlings are duly trained in the law they are known as *sekkhas*. Such *sekkhas* may become Arahats when they are reborn in the realm of the Infinity of Space. In that case, only wholesome and inoperative (*kiriya*) consciousness arise together with their respective concomitants. But matter is absent there. Only *nāma*, *citta* and *cetasika*—all in a state of flux—are present. In that realm all phenomena are

ABSENCE OF ARŪPĀVACARA

psychical. It just occurs to me that psychic beings need no food, clothing or shelter. But it is usual for artists and painters to depict this realm and others of the Formless Sphere as having palaces and mansions. But in Nibbāna they will be superfluous, as in Nibbāna there is neither mind nor matter.

Today non-Buddhists have become highly interested in space, but the space they have in mind is in the material sense. They may not, therefore, be able to assimilate the idea of the existence of the realm of Infinity of Space. But Buddha clearly differentiates the realm of mind and its constituents together with its state of absorptions (*jhāna*) from the realm of no-mind where all its concomitants and absorptions are nullified. A meditating yogi who concentrates his mind on the rise and fall of the aggregates can aspire to reaching that stage of knowledge of equanimity called *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇa*. If he reaches that stage, he would feel the disappearance of his physical self, experiencing only a stream of consciousness that floats in space. As his knowledge progresses this stream will become clearer and clearer. Strictly speaking, this is not absorption in Infinity of Space; but it is a vipassanā-insight akin to that absorption.

From the foregoing it may also be adduced that there is no consciousness and its concomitant appertaining to the realm of Infinity of

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Consciousness; and the same may be said of consciousness and its concomitant appertaining to the realm of Nothingness, and of Neither Perception nor Not Perception. The last plane of existence is the highest where perception is so subtle that it can be described as an intermediate stage between perception and non-perception. Equally subtle are *phassa*, contact, *vedanā*, sensation, *citta*, mind, and *cetasika*, concomitant of the mind that can be met with in that realm. In Nibbāna such subtleties of the mind are entirely absent.

Those lacking in faith in the dhamma and unable to realize the attainment of *jhāna* or *samāpatti*, mode of ecstatic meditation, abnegate all teachings relating to the realms of existence just above described. What such sceptics should do is to practise insight-meditation as taught by Buddha. If they do this they will attain *jhāna* that belongs to the realm of Neither Perception nor Not Perception, and realize for themselves the difference between the *jhānic* state in Formless Sphere and Nibbāna where such a state becomes redundant. It is fruitless to reject *jhāna* and Nibbāna without any practical investigation.

ABSENCE OF BOTH MIND AND MATTER IN NIBBĀNA

In Nibbāna there are no such things as *nāma* or *citta* or *cetasika* which can be met with in Sense-Sphere of Form-Sphere. It naturally

NIBBĀNA IS BEYOND ALL WORLDS

follows that mind and matter that belong to the 31 planes of existence are totally absent in Nibbāna. But some would like to advance an unusual proposition that after the *parinibbāna* of Buddha and his Arahats, they acquire a special kind of mind and matter in Nibbāna. Such an extraordinary way of thinking may appeal to those who cannot do away with *atta* or ego.

With regard to this proposition a learned Sayadaw reasoned that if there is a special kind of mind and matter in Nibbāna, there must also be a special kind of rebirth which gives rise to a special kind of old age, disease and death which in turn bring about a special kind of sorrow, lamentation, suffering, distress and despair. When the teachings explicitly say cessation, it will be an impropriety to go beyond it and formulate the idea of a special kind of existence. Extinction points to nothing but nothingness. Nibbāna, which is not involved in *nāma* and *rūpa*, cannot be made to get involved either in this world or in other worlds.

NIBBĀNA IS BEYOND ALL WORLDS

Hence the Text says, "*Nayanī loko, na paro loko*," which means "neither in this world nor in other worlds." In the absence of matter there can be no concept of darkness; and in the absence of the concept of darkness, there can be no concept of light. Hence in Nibbāna

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there is no sun nor moon. Where no new bodies of the *khandhās* arise there can be no darkness or light. But the question arises whether it is possible for sentient beings to come to Nibbāna in the way that beings from the nether worlds come to the human world, or beings from the human world come to the world of devas. But in Nibbāna there are no such comings. The usual term to describe the realization of Nibbāna is that Buddhas and Arahats "enter" Nibbāna, or specifically, *anupādisesa* Nibbāna. This does not mean the arrival of the new *khandhas* but the cutting off of the flow of *nama* and *rūpa* that causes existence. It is the complete extinction of aggregates; and this extinction is recognized as *anupādisesa* Nibbāna. It is not a place where beings make their landing from other planes of existence.

No one goes out or gets transported from Nibbāna to other planes of existence either. Beings with wholesome *kammas* depart this human world for the world of *devas*; and those from heaven might also come down to earth as human beings. Those with unwholesome *kammas* might prefer to going down to the nether worlds. In Nibbāna there are no such goings.

Attributes Of Nibbāna

NIBBĀNA HAS NO MASS

It is often asked whether Buddhas and Arahats exist as individuals in Nibbāna. There is no

ATTRIBUTES OF NIBBĀNA

mass in Nibbāna. As it is not built up with a special kind of matter or mind, it cannot be looked upon as a mountain peopled by individuals, standing solidly across the firmament like heaven or earth.

NIBBĀNA IS DEATHLESS AND BIRTHLESS

In the 31 planes of existence one is born to die and be reborn to die again. Nibbāna is Deathless and Birthless. In the world of devas and Brahmas birth means sudden appearance, and death sudden disappearance. Nibbāna is cessation of all *khandhās*. In such a cessation there is neither appearance nor disappearance.

NIBBĀNA HAS NO ABODE

Nibbāna has no abode, and, therefore, it cannot be located. It is neither here nor there. It is not in the heavens. In the term, *nāmarūpa*, *nāma* denotes that it embraces Nibbāna; but it is, in that context, neither *citta* (consciousness) nor *cetasika* (its concomitant). So the three aspects of consciousness, namely, *upāda*, arising, *ṭhīti*, static, and *bhaṅga*, dissolution, are non-existent in Nibbāna. Figuratively speaking, Nibbāna abides in this one-fathom-long body.

NO OCCURRENCE OF NĀMARŪPA

In this body of the *khandhās*, *nāma* and *rūpa* are continually in a state of flux, and so we say that they flow like a stream incessantly.

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A yogi who has realized the knowledge of the rise and fall of conditioned things is aware of *nāmarūpa* arising now and passing away the next moment. When he has developed the knowledge of equanimity in himself he feels that the whole stream of *nāma* and *rūpa* stop flowing. This is extinction.

NIBBĀNA OFFERS YOU NO SENSE-OBJECTS

In the absence of *nāma*, *rūpa*, *citta*, *cetasika* etc., there can be no sense-objects; and in the absence of sense-objects no opportunities arise for mental formations to play their part.

NIBBĀNA MEANS THE END OF SUFFERING

Since there are no primary elements and no *nāmarūpa*, everything ceases, and this cessation gives rise to eternal peace. All sufferings end.

Rohitassa Sutta

Nibbāna is not situated anywhere, but, figuratively speaking, it resides inside the body of an Arahāt. This is mentioned in Rohitassa Sutta in Saṃyutta and Aṅguttara Nikāyas.

When Buddha was residing in Jetavana monastery in Sāvātthi, a *deva*, by the name of Rohitassa, approached him and asked: "Reverend Sir! Is it possible for one to go to the end of the world where there is no becoming, no aging, no death and no rebirth?"

YOU CANNOT WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD

Buddha answered this question thus:

*Yutta kho āvuso na jāyati, na jīyati, na
mīyati, na cavati, na upappajjati; nāhaṃ
“taṃ gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñāteyyaṃ
daṭṭheyyuṃ patteya” yanti vadāmi.*

Young friend! I have never maintained that one can walk to the end of the world where there is no becoming, no aging, no death and no rebirth. I never say that by such means the end of the world can be reached, realized and known.

Rohitassa was very much pleased with this exposition. He was at one time an ascetic possessing supernormal knowledge with which he attempted to seek the end of the world. He walked the universe stepping in one stride from one planet to another for fully a century; but his relentless search bore no fruit. At the end of his mission, he died and was reborn a *deva* in the same universe which he had traversed far and wide as a powerful ascetic. What he had in mind was, however, the material universe. What Buddha had in mind in answering him was the round of suffering caused by the perpetual flux of *nāma* and *rūpa*. It is only when this round ceases can one reach the end of the world.

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SUFFERINGS END WITH THE END OF THE WORLD

Buddha then continued:

Na kho panāhaṃ āvuso appatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi; api ca khvāhaṃ āvuso imasmiṃyeva vyāmamatte kaḷevare sasaññimhi samanake lokañca paññapemi lokasamudayañca lokanirodhañca lokanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadaṃ.

And, young friend, I do not say that all sufferings will cease without reaching the end of the world. But I do say in a conventional sense that the world or the universe lies in this one-fathom-long body which possesses mind and perception. I also teach the genesis of the universe, the cessation of the universe and the way leading to the cessation of the universe.

If one cannot reach the end of the universe through physical exertions, one can get there through the exercise of knowledge of wisdom. What Buddha means by the universe is suffering. One who fails to get to its end through wisdom cannot attain the state of cessation of suffering. The entire universe conditioned by the flux of *nāma* and *rūpa* is the universe of suffering beyond which lies Nibbāna.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS RESIDE IN THE BODY

In this one-fathom-long body the universe can be proclaimed. It is all *dukkha*, suffering, and

THE UNIVERSE WITHIN US

so it reveals the Truth of Suffering. In it can also be found the cause of suffering, and so it teaches us the Truth of the Cause of Suffering. In it there can be sought emancipation from suffering, and so it also shows us the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. And, this cessation can be realized also in itself. It, therefore, shows us the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. Hence all these four Noble Truths can be discovered in the bodies of beings belonging to this universe.

You cannot locate Nibbāna. Before entering *parinibbāna* Arahats still carry the burden of the *khandhas* which all cease to arise after the *parinibbāna*. It may be said that this cessation takes place inside the body of the Arahats. Hence we speak conventionally of the existence of Nibbāna inside our bodies of the *khandhās*. According, however, to Abhidhamma, Nibbāna is extraneous to the body. That is the reason why in the *Udāna* Pāli Text it is described as *appatiṭṭham* which means "having no place to stand on."

THE UNIVERSE WITHIN US

The Truth of Suffering relates to the suffering inherent in the five aggregates of clinging, *upādānakkhandhā*, which arises in the sense-base as reflected by the sense-object which enters

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the sense-door. When you look at a thing, the eye base receives the image of the eye-object through the eye-door, and the contact established between the base and the object lets you know that you have seen the thing. This phenomenon of seeing is quite obvious. You know that you have eyes, and feel that you are in full possession of them. You, as a seer, exist. The object you see is clear and pleasing to your mind. Consider in like manner the remaining phenomena of hearing, tasting and so on. Whenever each of them arises, attachment or clinging to the sense-object under observation is developed. When you see someone, you recognize that someone as man or woman possessing features which appear as agreeable to you. You at once get attached to him or her. Your eye and the eye-object constitute *rupupādānakkhandhā*, the aggregate of clinging to form or matter.

(Pp, 189 to 198 are not translated in extenso as they are repetitions. Only a gist is given here.)

When you recognize what you see, you should know that *viññāṇa*, consciousness, is operating, you now have *viññānupādānakkhandhā*, the aggregate of clinging to sensation. Having seen the object, sensation, pleasurable or otherwise, arises in you. It is *vedanā*. Now you have developed *vedanupādānakkhandhā*, aggregate of clinging to consciousness. You usually note

what you see so that you can recall it to mind when occasion demands. *Sañña*, perception, has developed in you; and you now have *saññupādānak-khandhā*, aggregate of clinging to perception. Then there are the volitional activities that take place in your mind in relation to wholesome or unwholesome deeds that you commit. Such mental states outside the domain of feeling and perception constitute *saṅkhāra* to which you get attached. Thus arises *saṅkhārūpādānākkhandhā*, aggregate of clinging to mental formations. Now from this act of seeing, hearing, etc., all the five aggregates of clinging have arisen.

These aggregates are always arising in us; but the arising is so instantaneous that we hardly notice it. We almost always fail to capture the moment when the phenomenon occurs. But with mindfulness or insight-meditation we can note the arising and passing away of *upādānakkhandhās* to realize the fact that this state of flux is highly unsatisfactory, and that such unsatisfactoriness is *dukkha*, suffering, itself.

These five aggregates of clinging form this universe. They reveal us the Truth of Suffering. As an ordinary individual fails to note seeing just as he sees, and, therefore, becomes unable to grasp the real nature of the phenomenon at the instant it arises, he feels that his seeing is pleasurable. He takes *dukkha*, suffer-

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ing, for *sukha*, pleasure; and thus a liking for pleasure is developed. This is clinging which becomes intensified into craving. As he makes efforts to fulfil his desires to appease his sense of attachment, kamma-formations take place. Now *saṅkhāra* is brought into play. Because of the action of *saṅkhāras*, a dying man perceives through his mind-door his own actions, *kamma*, signs of actions, *kamma-nimitta*, and signs of destiny, *gati-nimitta*. His mind will be bent on these objects because of his sense of attachment. He is very much like a man drowning. He grapples whatever object that comes by. He grapples the object of his mind, *ārammaṇa*. Then death consciousness occurs, and as he leaves behind his *khandhās*, this consciousness recedes into the past. But as his attachment cannot be done away with, the mind-object, derived from the death consciousness of his previous existence, influences the rebirth-linking consciousness that has just occurred in this present existence. Thus a new life begins with a new *citta*; and this *citta* links the past with the present. It is, therefore, called *patisandhi citta*, rebirth-linking consciousness. This consciousness is then succeeded by mental contents of the factor of life. When *cittas* occur, their concomitants, *cetasikas*, follow them. Then *rūpas* which are dependent on them arise. If craving, *taṇhā*, cannot be cut off these *nāmas* and *rūpas* continue to come up *ad infinitum* throughout

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existences. Hence, *taṇhā* is the cause that brings about this universe, and since this universe is a mass of suffering, it holds up the Truth of the Cause of Suffering for all to see.

Seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching are all the factors of *dukkha*, and it is on that score that *taṇhā* becomes *samudaya*, the cause. Because of this *samudaya*, we like to see, hear, taste, smell and touch. And again *dukkha* arises. And these are the Truth of suffering and the Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

MEDITATING ON FOUR ELEMENTS

Consciousness occurs when contact is established between the sense-base and the sense-object. A meditator starts with the practice of concentrating his mind on this phenomenon of consciousness that arises originally from the four essential properties of matter, namely, *pathavi* (solidity), *tejo* (thermal energy), *vāyo* (motive force) and *āpo* (fluidity). When Mahāsati-*paṭṭhāna* sutta says, "I know I am going when I go," it is a direction to the yogi to know the element of motion that is brought into play through contact which excites consciousness. When you are sitting, know that you are sitting, noting the physical tension brought about by the act of sitting. You might then be aware of other physical or mental phenomena taking place in conjunction with the posture that you

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are assuming. For instance, you might have noticed that as you sit, your feet are touching each other, your hands are interlocking each other, your wearing apparel is clinging to your body, and so on and so forth. When you observe them with mindfulness you will come to realize the nature of the activities of matter that arises as sense-base and sense-object come into contact with each other.

AN EASY STEP IN MEDITATION

So that both the young and the old can take up meditation, we prescribe what we consider to be an easy course in insight-meditation beginning with noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. As you breathe in the abdomen becomes distended, and as you breathe out it subsides. You will experience the motion of the rising and falling of the abdominal wall and recognize it as the activity of the element of motion, *vāyo*. You note this. That is to say, you concentrate your mind on the rising and falling of the abdomen with the intellectual appreciation of the nature of the phenomenon. There shall be no respite between the two consecutive movements. Keep your mind fixed on the start of the rising movement following it till it ends, and switch over to the start of the falling movement till it also ends. But, if, in the process, you notice that there is some respite after breathing in or after breathing out, you must be mindful that

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you are sitting (if you sit while meditating) in the meanwhile. At times ideas will be formed in your mind. You may think of something. Or you may have some intention to do this or that. Note all such ideations. Whenever your mind "swims" away, as the Burmese expression has it, from the mainstream of mindfulness, you follow it. Don't let it get away from your mental grip. You continue noting the phenomenon of thinking. Then resume noting the movements of your abdomen. Sometimes you may encounter sensations, mostly unpleasant, because you feel stiff and tired, or hot and painful as you sit meditating. In that case note this tiredness and pain; and when such sensations disappear concentrate your attention again on the rising and falling of the abdomen. To put it briefly, please note the movements of the abdomen, both your physical and psychological behaviour and experience so that there can be no interval in the whole process of meditation during which your mind is kept idle. If you have no special object on which to focus your attention, you keep on noting as usual the rising and falling of your abdomen which is distended and tense at one moment and relaxed and flaccid at the next.

As your power of concentration improves you will notice that each movement of the muscle has many distinct pieces of action that may be

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called incidents and that each incident arises and, then disappears. Each appearance or disappearance that occurs in succession is palpable. This observation applies to the mind-object. But the noting mind, the subject, also behaves in much the same way as the object, now appearing and now disappearing in quick succession. As your observation gets keener and keener moment by moment, you recognize every part of the phenomenon that happens and dissolves, as if each has been set apart from the other to take its own course. As the noting mind and the noted mind-object come to pass as if for the sake of dissolution, it now dawns upon you that they are transient. They are forever in a state of flux. It is their inherent nature to arise and vanish. Such transience is the most unsatisfactory. What is unsatisfactory is suffering. Now you have arrived at the knowledge of the Truth of Suffering. This enlightenment dispels ignorance, *avijjā*. Therefore, *taṇhā*, craving, fails to assert itself as your mind-object. As craving is absent, *upādāna*, attachment, cannot act as its accomplice. As no attachment occurs, no volitional activities can operate for the satisfaction of desires conjured up by the mind and its object. It means that no actions can be formed when we say that no kamma-formations arise. When kamma-formations cease no rebirth-linking consciousness can take place. So there will be no new birth, that is to say,

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no new *khandhās*. This indicates the cessation of suffering and of the cause leading to suffering. At that particular instant when you recognize this cessation you realize Nibbāna. This may be only for one moment, but that moment is the most precious. Noting and knowing the phenomena which ultimately leads to the knowledge of cessation tantamount to worldly (*lokiya*) realization of the Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of Suffering.

It is, therefore, commonly said that in the body of the meditating yogi the four Noble Truths reside.

As *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇa*, knowledge of equanimity towards the five aggregates, is achieved, one becomes so absorbed in meditation that one feels one's body, together with its sense of touch and perception, comes to cessation. Hence the Text further says:

In Nibbāna this body, together with its sense touch and the working of *āyatana*s, sense-bases, ceases. One must be aware of such cessation.

This, in effect, is the realization of Nibbāna-peace through the Aryan Path. Hence the commentaries add:

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

In this one-fathom-long body is proclaimed the Universe, where the Truth of suffering, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and this the truth of the Noble Eightfold Path can be discovered. Know, my dear friend, that with these words I do not proclaim the reality of the Four Noble Truths in such inanimate objects as grass or wood, but in body made up of the four primary elements.

The Truth of Suffering is evident everywhere; but the Truth of the Cause of Suffering can be adduced from the intrinsic nature of all worldlings who cannot get rid of defilements of the mind. Before one can tread the Path one can search for the Cause through the introspection of one's own body. The Truth of the Cessation of the Cause is conventionally said to be present in the Noble Ones despite the fact that they may have some residues of defilements and *khandhās* within them.

With Arahats, however, as defilements have been totally exterminated, cessation is said to have been achieved. The Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path can, of course, be discovered in the body of the Arahāt heading for the Path and its Fruition. Here it is meant to show that Nibbāna-peace can be realized only with the total extinction of *nāmarūpa* and its concomitants.

SUFFERING AND ITS CAUSE

SUFFERING AND ITS CAUSE BECOME MANIFEST DURING IDEATION

In the foregoing I have shown how aggregates of clinging arise through the interaction of sense-bases like the eye, ear, etc., and of sense objects like form, sound, etc. Now I shall deal with the interaction between the mind and mind-object -- which in ordinary language, is ideation -- that gives rise to aggregates of clinging. An introspection into this nature of ideation will give out the truth relating to suffering and its cause.

As you think you are aware where the seat of thinking lies. Obviously it lies in your body and in your heart-base. Add to them the mind-object. Depending on these three factors of the process of ideation, thoughts, intentions, desires, etc., arise. If you fail to note the real nature of this process, you might be led to believe that the entire physical body together with its mind-base is your own self. "Here I am," you might say to yourself, "This body is mine. It is I who am thinking. This is my thought. I am the mind-object. Or, he is the mind-object." You might formulate such ideas in your head. But in fact the dhammas that arise as you think and try to know what you think are all the aggregates of clinging, *upādānakkhandhā*. These aggregates are all a mass of suffering. Now you see the Truth of Suffering. These

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aggregates of clinging may be categorised as follows:—

1. At the time of ideation, the mind-base and the body which forms the seat of the mind start operating. They constitute the aggregates of clinging to matter, *rūpupādānakkhandhā*.
2. Then thinking occurs. All thoughts and ideas constitute the aggregates of clinging to consciousness, *viññānupādānakkhandhā*.
3. Then feelings arise, discriminating between pleasure and pain generally. They constitute the aggregates of clinging to sensations, *vedanupādānakkhandhā*.
4. Then perceptions arise noting the mind-object. They constitute the aggregates of clinging to perceptions, *saññupādānakkhandhā*.
5. Then mental formations occur. They constitute aggregates of clinging to mental formations, *saṅkhārupādānakkhandhā*.

The last-mentioned aggregates, the products of volition, are extremely conspicuous; you can find them everywhere. When consciousness is developed through the act of seeing, hearing, etc., mental formations take place

SUFFERING AND ITS CAUSE

in the form of thoughts and emotions. This is how desire and attachment for the pleasures of the senses arise. As you see or hear things, you discriminate between good and bad or between wholesome and unwholesome. There will be an affinity for things you consider to be pleasant. But when they are not to your liking, anger, disgust, and loathsomeness assail your mind. This leads you to the growth of egoistical pride that persuades you to formulate wrong views. Then doubts, jealousy, anxiety and restlessness come trailing behind to trouble you. On the other hand, it is also quite possible for you to have developed wholesome thoughts like faith, charity, mindfulness, even temper, sympathy, kindness and so forth as you think well and rightly of the sense-objects you observe. All these tendencies, whether wholesome or otherwise are *saṅkhāra-kkhandhās*, aggregates of mental formations. When you intend to sit, or stand, or go, or speak, this *saṅkhāra* is at work. If your volition is wholesome, wholesome *kammas*, actions, are formed; if not, unwholesome *kammas*. The world of these aggregates of clinging to formations is verily the Universe; and this Universe is a mass of suffering. Those not used to the application of insight-knowledge to the absolute realities of suffering through meditation exercises develop a wrong sense of exhilaration over their thoughts and ideas, hoping for the better even when they come face to face with miseries. They are

pleased with the idea of the existence of self. They long for its prosperity, mistaking pain for happiness. In this way attachment grows in them; and they make all kinds of endeavours to satisfy their desires. To appease them, they will not hesitate to kill, or steal, or rob, or cheat, or commit all sorts of crimes. Others, however, may do wholesome deeds with a view to accumulate good merits in their future lives or rounds of existence. Kamma-formations arise in accordance with merits or demerits that they achieve. When dying, actions, signs of actions and signs of destiny appear as sense-objects to be perceived by sense-bases; and depending on what appears in their minds' eyes, as we say in ordinary parlance, rebirth-linking consciousness is formed in the next new existence where fresh sense-bases and sense-objects interact as before to produce clinging, craving and attachment which all go to make up the same round of suffering. For, the entire string of *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *kamma* and *bhava* spells nothing but the Truth of Suffering. It is only when this string is cut off with the knowledge of equanimity towards conditioned things that Nibbāna-peace can be established. So Buddha has this to say:

Where mind and perception with the mind cease, there is cessation of all *āyatana*s or sense-bases, and this should be known (by the meditating yogi).

DISCOVERY ON NIBBĀNA

This cessation is Nibbāna. In the Text the word *mana* is used, and this needs clarification. It has been used in view of a combination of the two types of consciousness, namely, *bhavaṅga*, passive consciousness, and *avajjana*, apprehending consciousness. *Bhavaṅga* is the state of mind that occurs while one is dreaming or half-asleep. It is not as important as *avajjana* which needs to be closely observed so that you become aware of its cessation. In the Text the word, *dhamma saññā*, is also used. It means the perception of the sense-object. But with regard to this, we usually say *citta* or mind for easy understanding. So I have rendered this apprehending consciousness simply as *citta*. What is meant here is the cessation or the extinction of the *citta* which takes in the mind-object, and the *citta* which ordinarily knows, and the *citta* which finally apprehends. This represents the three phases of the *citta* in operation. Their cessation denotes the complete annihilation of all formations: and therein lies Nibbāna. This dhamma can be realized only with the practice of insight-meditation. When the mind is inclined to Nibbāna, all forms of consciousness cease, when Path consciousness and Fruition consciousness are realized.

DISCOVERY OF NIBBĀNA WHERE THE UNIVERSE ENDS

In the third part of this discourse, it has been shown that as we are noting the phenomenon

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of seeing, both the eye-base and perception of form get dissolved, that as we are noting the phenomenon of hearing, both the ear-base and perception of sound get dissolved, that as we are noting the phenomenon of smelling, both the nose-base and perception of smell get dissolved, that as we are noting the phenomenon of tasting, both the tongue-base and perception of taste get dissolved, that as we are noting the phenomenon of touching both the body and perception of touch get dissolved and that as we are noting ideation, both the mind and perception of ideas get dissolved. To know this dissolution or cessation of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental perceptions at the six mind-doors denotes the realization of the Truth of the Cessation of the Cause of Suffering. This discovery of cessation cannot be realized by just thinking or imagining, but by actual practice of meditating on *nāmarūpa* till knowledge of equanimity is achieved. When it is truly realized conviction that all conditioned things spell suffering will be gained. You will also come to the conclusion that craving for that suffering is suffering itself. When craving is dispelled no new becoming can arise. On the attainment of enlightenment Buddha uttered this *udāna*, Word of Triumph, denoting satisfaction over his conquest of craving:

DISCOVERY OF NIBBĀNA

*Anekajāti saṃsāraṃ, sandhāvissaṃ enibbisaṃ.
Gahakāraṃ gavesanto, dukkhā jāti punappunaṃ.*

*Gahakāraka diṭṭhosi, puna gehaṃ na kāhasi,
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā, gahakūtaṃ visñakhataṃ.
Vīsakharagataṃ, cittaṃ, taṇhānaṃ khaya majjhagā.*

I have gone through the round of rebirths seeking the builder of the house (of this *khandhās*) but to no avail for lack of wisdom. To be born again and again is misery indeed! Now, house-builder! I have thee beholden! Thou shalt no longer build any house again, for thy beams and rafters have been pulled down and the ridge-pole dismantled. My mind, inclined to the annihilation of all kamma-formations, has attained the end of cravings.

Needless to say, the house-builder is *taṇhā*, craving, which builds the house of the *khandhās* in the round of existences, thus bringing forth the rise of *jāti*, becoming, the most horrifying of all miseries and pain that can be encountered. If he is not discovered, he will continue building the house again and again. You may not have any inclination to go down to the nether worlds, but *taṇhā* will insist on your taking up residence in the house he builds there. You shall never find him if you fail to gain *sammāsambhodhi ñāṇa* or enlightenment. Buddha, before the realization of this wisdom, had to

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go round and round through myriads of re-births.

It has now become a custom with Buddhists in Burma to recite the two *gāthas* of the *udāna* when cetiyas or images are to be sanctified. It is also not unusual for the laity to recite *paṭiccasamuppāda* (law of causality) both in direct and reverse order during that ceremony. This Law was meditated upon by Buddha on the seventh day of his enlightenment. The sanctification-ceremony is called "anekazatin" in Burmese. This practice does not prevail in Thailand or Cylon.

APPATIṬṬHA, NO FOOTHOLD

What is important to note is that Nibbāna has no foothold. It has no location. When we speak of Nibbāna as residing within this one-fathom-long body, we mean to say it metaphorically. This has been emphasised again and again. No doubt, *dukkha saccā*, the Truth of Suffering, and *samudaya saccā*, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering, are actually apparent in the body of any individual. *Magga saccā*, the Truth of the Path, lies latent in the yogi who practises insight-meditation to arrive at the Noble Path. *Nirodha saccā*, the Truth of the Cessation of the Cause of Suffering, which is Nibbāna itself, resides in the body of the Noble Ones

DISCOVERY OF NIBBĀNA

who have inclined to the Path and its Fruition. So it may be said that it is always present in the bodies of the Arahats.

But this does not mean to say that Nibbāna exists with the Noble Ones in the strict materialistic sense of the word. In the heart of the Noble Ones all defilements have been exterminated. This extermination has been given a location in a figurative sense; and this has been explicitly mentioned in Visuddhi Magga thus:—

Nibbāna has no location. But when speaking of cessation of defilements, the place where defilements are situated have to be mentioned. So a location is indicated metaphorically.

In the usual saying that eyes are lovely and that craving for those lovely eyes are extinguished, you cannot actually locate where such extinguishment takes place. Therefore, we can only speak figuratively of the place where Nibbāna is situated.

Abhidhamma is explicit on this point. It clearly states that Nibbāna is extraneous to the body. It is accomplished outside the body, *bahiddha*. Hence we say that it has no residence, no abode and no location.

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As a result of listening well and respectfully to this discourse on Nibbāna, may this audience enter Nibbāna, the end of the world of suffering, through the revelation of the Truth of Suffering arrived at by the practice of insight-meditation.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

PART V

(Delivered on the 8th. waning of Thadingyut, 1326 B. E. corresponding to October 14, 1946).

This is in continuation of my previous four lectures on the subject of Nibbāna which has been described as a state of cessation of all kamma-formations caused by defilements enabling no new *khandhās* to arise.

Cessation of Craving

Vāna, from which is derived the word Nibbāna, means craving for *kāmabhava*, sensual existence, *rūpabhava*, material existence and *arūpabhava*, immaterial existence. It takes delight in both the objects of sense and thought. It hops from one object to another in regular or irregular manner, or in correct sequence or in reverse order. It moves like a shuttle in weaving. In fact the original meaning of the word relates to weaving. Past, present and future existences are woven into a pattern as variegated as human fancy could allow.

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Nibbāna has its aim in the liberation from the clutches of craving. The scriptures say; "*Vānato nikkhantanti nibbānam*" - - Nibbāna is a departure from craving. Another exegesis says: "*N' atthi vanam etthati nibbānam*" - - Craving is not in Nibbāna. All these go to show that craving has no Nibbāna as its objective.

Lust or sensual craving cherishes that sexes should be differentiated. It loves sensual pleasures derived from the organs of sense like eyes, ears, etc. It feels wearisome in the absence of the five constituents of sensual pleasures. Craving developed in material world likes material existence of Form Sphere and that in immaterial world, immaterial existence or Formless Sphere. Those who are obsessed with craving cannot realize the ills of existence, and so they have no affinity for Nibbāna where there is no becoming. People pray for Nibbāna; but when they are told that they would be instantly transported there with all changes for a return to the present existence barred, they would hesitate in the manner of a devotee in the following story.

Let me Consider it

A lay devotee prayed before the image of a Buddha that he reach Nibbāna as soon as possible. Hearing his frequent prayers, a practical joker hid himself behind the image

and said with a thundering voice, "You have prayed often enough. Today I am sending you to Nibbāna." The aspirant to Nibbāna replied, "Well and good! But let me go back home to consult my wife." When he got home he related the incident to his wife and sought her advice. "What a lucky man," she said, "Don't hesitate. Go quickly." The naive devotee then asked, "Consider whether you can run the house without me." She replied, "Go without any misgiving! There's no need for me to consider." The husband retorted, "Even though you won't consider the propriety, let me consider it." It may not be a true story; but it smacks of realism.

Loth to Earn Merit for Nibbāna

Accumulating merits through the practice of insight-meditation brings one nearer to Nibbāna; but few actually take it up. We usually have to make tremendous efforts in persuading a devotee to meditate. Consider the case of Queen Khemā, the wife of King Bimbisāra. Although he had been a devotee, she had never visited Buddha. He had to employ a number of stratagems to prompt her to go to the monastery. But once she was in the presence of Buddha, all was well; and she became an Arahāt the moment she had listened to the dhamma. There is also another story about

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Kāla, the son of Anāthapindika. Let us call him Maung Kāla in the Burmese way.

MAUNG KĀLA

Anāthapindika, the millionaire, heard the news about Buddha while he was trading at Rajagaha. He visited him and listened to his dhamma. At once he became a stream-winner, *sotāpanna*, and invited the Great Teacher to reside at Sāvattthi. He bought Prince Jeta's garden at 18 crores silver, built a monastery costing him another 18 crores, and held a libation ceremony spending still another 18 crores. He donated the monastery to Buddha and his disciples. Everyday he would feed 500 monks, keeping sabbath himself and encouraging his household to do like him. Although he had become a *kyaungdagā*, donor of monastery, his son, Maung Kāla, had no inclination for Buddha's dhamma.

There was enough reason for him not to have any sense of devotion for Buddha and the dhamma, for, in those days people followed Purāna Kassapa's heretical teachings. There were also many kinds of animists. Some worshipped Brahma as god. Had it not been for Buddha Anāthapindika himself would have been involved with various kinds of religious denominations current before Buddha's enlightenment. Maung Kāla might also be a follower of heretical schools of religion. It might not be

convenient for him to change from one religion to another.

The father thought about the son's welfare: "My son knows not Buddha. He cannot appreciate the Law and the Order. He has no desire to go to Buddha's monastery. He has no inclination to listen to the dhamma. He shuns doing chores for the convenience of the monks. Should he die a heretic he would surely go to *avīci*, the lowest of the nether worlds. That the son of a Buddhist is not a Buddhist is the height of impropriety. If he gets to *avīci* while I am still living, it will be the worst. Usually money can change the mind of many. I must send him to the monastery at the risk of indulging in bribery." Thinking thus, the millionaire told his son that he would give the latter a hundred pieces of silver if only he would go to the monastery. The son accepted the offer.

When he got to the monastery Maung Kāla chose a cozy corner where he slept heartily, for he had no mind to listen to the dhamma. When he came home, the father fed him well in the belief that his son had kept sabbath. Maung Kāla was always after money and so he had his meal only after he had been paid. Next the rich man told him that if only he would listen to the dhamma and relate but one stanza of it to the father, he would be rewarded with 1,000 silver.

Maung Kāla paid another visit to the monastery and this time he listened carefully to what Buddha preached. The Teacher knew him well, and he purposely delivered several discourses which the rich man's son could not easily commit to memory. As the stipulation with his father was to retell what Buddha taught even if it be but one verse, he now took especial care to understand. Reaching understanding, he had faith developed, and at this psychological moment Buddha preached his sermon so that it went well with him. Having accumulated perfection (*pāramī*) in the past, Maung Kāla at once attained to *sotāpatti* stage and became a stream-winner.

Once a *sotāpanna* his faith in Buddhadhamma became steadfast, all doubts and wrong views having been dispelled. On that particular day he did not go home by himself early, but, instead, remained behind in the company of Buddha and his disciples. When they visited the rich man's house for alms-meal, he followed them. But on reaching the house he became worried that his father might give out the 1,000 silver to him in the presence of Buddha, for, he did not want to appear that he went to the monastery with pecuniary motive. A sense of shame had overtaken him. As usual he took his meals after Buddha and the monks; but this time he took care not to make himself conspicuous.

SOTĀPANNA IS SUPERIOR TO A UNIVERSAL MONARCH

Nevertheless, Anāthapindika came to him and paid him the money as promised saying that it was a reward for his son's attendance at the monastety to keep sabbath and hear the law preached. He was greatly mortified and refused to accept the money. The father related the whole incident to Buddha, saying that on this particular day his son had radiated happiness unlike in previous occasions when greed seized him.

Then said Buddha: "Your son, rich man, he has become a stream-winner who is nobler than a universal monarch, or a deva or a Brahmā."

A STREAM-WINNER FAR EXCELS A UNIVERSAL MONARCH

Almost everyone likes to be a king. To him even headmanship has its appeals. A kingdom is better than a principality. A bigger kingdom is far better. An emperor is more powerful than a feudal lord. A monarch ruling the entire continent would be far more powerful. If one becomes a universal monarch or cakkavatti, lord of all the four continents, nothing more can be said. Wielding his magic wheel of authority and shining in an aura of virtue, all emperors and kings bow to him. Because of his virtuousness, all his subjects possess affluence, solidarity and righteousness.

A life of luxury enjoyed by a universal monarch pales into insignificance when compared to the

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state of peacefulness achieved by a *sotāpanna*, stream-winner. The monarch's happiness would last only for his life-time. If he rules the universe with kingly virtues, he may be reborn after his death in heaven; but no one can say for certain whether he would be destined for Nibbāna or for the four nether worlds. But once a devotee becomes a *sotāpanna*, all doors for the nether worlds will be closed for him. Should he go to heaven, he has only seven more existences to wait, for, at the last of these seven existences, he will be destined for Arahatsip subsequently attaining to the state of complete annihilation of the rounds of suffering after his *parinibbāna*. Buddha, therefore, praised Maung Kāla whose life was far better than that of a universal monarch.

ALSO EXCELS A DEVA OR A BRAHMA

A *sotāpanna* is nobler than a deva or a Brahma. There are six Celestial Planes of existence, of which Catumaharajika is the lowest in the order. Even there, devas enjoy long life. A day in that Plane is equivalent to 50 years of life on this earth. The span of life of a deva in Catumaharajika is 500 heavenly years which equal 9 million years of our human world. Humans live to be 100; in which case a deva's life is 90,000 times longer than human life. They possess not only longevity, but also beauty. They enjoy happiness more than we do. The devas.

SÔTĀPANNA IS SUPERIOR TO A BRAHMĀ

of Tāvatisa excel those of Catumahārājika. Their span of life is three times longer than that of the residents of the lower Place. Computed to earth-years, their span of life equals to 36 million years. Longevity at Yāma is four times that of Tāvatisa, and the span of life there is 144 million earth-years. Calculating the earth-years in the same manner described, Tusitā's longevity is 576 million years, Nimmānarati's is 2304 million and Paranimmitavassavati's is 9,216 million. Whatever their longevity they cannot, when they die, escape from the four nether worlds should they by chance be reborn into this human world to fall into bad company and commit evil deeds. Not being destined for Nibbāna despite their supernormal attainments, they cannot get away from the turning of the wheel of existence; and, therefore, they will be subjected to disease and death. *Sotāpannas* give a wide berth to four *niriyas* or woeful states and they have only seven existences to go before attaining to Nibbāna.

Brahmā's lives are far nobler and better than those of the devas. They are impervious to the wiles of the five constituents of sensual pleasure. They also enjoy peace. Their lives last from one-third of a world-cycle to 84,000 world cycles. But when Brahmās die, they revert to the world of the senses where, should by an unfortunate chance they happen to commit evil,

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they would also go down to the nether worlds. They also are subjected to rounds of suffering like aging and death, as they return to the sensual world. For *sotāpannas*, however, there are no *niriyas* awaiting them, and they are destined for Nibbāna after seven existences.

ALSO EXCELS THE KING OF BRAHMĀS

If the King of Brahmās is but an ordinary being not inclined to the dhamma, he cannot escape from the four *nirayas* nor from the rounds of suffering. A *sotāpanna* has nothing to fear them for he has only seven existences to go before he gets to Nibbāna where all sufferings cease.

What I would like to emphasise in the story of Maung Kāla is, firstly, the fact that he has to be coaxed into listening to the dhamma although he had long gained perfection that prepared him for the state of a *sotāpanna*, and, secondly, that craving is anathema to Nibbāna. One obsessed with craving would not hear of any teaching that points the way to Nibbāna. I would also like to remind you that once a *sotāpanna* is within sight of Nibbāna, he has but seven existences to go during which he will, as of course, be subjected to miseries and sufferings. In the end, however, he will be an Arahāt who can annihilate all defilements.

SOTĀPANNA IS SUPERIOR TO A BRAHMĀ

BRINGS IN SENSUOUS SPHERES DISLIKE A BRAHMĀ'S LIFE

Beings in sensuous spheres desire sensual pleasures arising out of differentiation of the sexes. Brahmās have no sex and so they do not have any desires for sensual pleasures derived from sexual relations. They are very happy in that state. But the lustful has no love for loveless Brahmās. He considers the absence of sensual pleasure as misery or *dukkha*. Brahmās live without eating. Where there is no need for food, no desire for it can arise; and this in itself should be happiness as lack of necessity for the daily round of food does away with many troubles. But sensuous beings love gustatory pleasures; and so to them absence of those pleasures means misery. Where contact is absent, no pleasurable tactile sensations can be enjoyed. But this state of things can also bring happiness, for it does away with desire. Because of this nature, those entranced in the jhanic state of Form Spheres feel happy. But not so with sensuous beings who regard life in those spheres as woeful because they are always obsessed with craving for pleasures of the senses.

BEINGS IN FORM SPHERES DISLIKE THE ABSENCE OF FORM OR BODY

In Formless Spheres *nāmas* like mind and volition dominate. There are four planes in

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these spheres, namely, *ākāsānañcāyatana*, the Plane of the Infinity of Space, *viññānañcāyatana*, the Plane of the Infinity of Consciousness, *akiñcaññāyatana*, the Plane of Nothingness and *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*, the Plane of Neither Perception nor Not-perception. Those who have perfected themselves in *arūpa jhāna* can get to any one of these four Planes where matter is totally absent. They live in the world of ideation where there is no material suffering. Those possessing craving for *kāma*, sensuality, and *rūpa*, materiality, do not like to be reborn in any Plane of Formless Spheres. But the occupants of those planes of formless existence are quite happy with their psychological conditions. They are, however, in a dead end. They are unaware of the appearance of Buddha or of their enlightenment. Having no material body, they lack in sense organs and so they are impervious to their teachings. No Buddha can teach them the dhamma. They live long lives, say, for twenty, forty, sixty or eighty-four world-cycles; but when they pass away they may be reborn in Sense-Spheres. Ālara and Udaka, who first taught religious discipline to Bodhisatta before he practised austerities, lost invaluable opportunities to see the light of the dhamma when Buddha attained enlightenment, because they happened to be reborn in one of the Formless Spheres, which is included in eight kinds of existence remote from the Path of

CRAVING AND NIBBĀNA

deliverence. If one gets to any one of the four Planes in Formless Spheres as an ordinary individual, one would surely miss the Path. But if one gets there as a *sotāpanna*, or *sakadāgāmi*, or *anāgāmi*, by virtue of vipassana-practice, he can attain to the state of an Arahāt and subsequently to Nibbāna.

CRAVING HAS NO AFFINITY FOR NIBBĀNA

The element of *anupādisesa* Nibbāna, total extinction of the *khandhās*, is not liked by any form of craving—craving for lust, craving for Form and craving for Formlessness. The majority who fails to get convinced of the futility of the *khandhās* and and kamma-formations has no love for that element of Nibbāna which leaves behind no substrata of existence. Yesterday, I talked about Lāludāyi who grumbled: "What happiness is there in Nibbāna which is devoid of sensations?" To him Nibbāna appeared to be a mass of suffering in the absence of sensations. Unbelievers, who have developed attachment to the *khandhās* and and kamma-formations, scoff at the idea of Nibbāna which they regard as the death of all deaths, as it ensures no return to life after death. Their attitude is the attitude of craving toward Nibbāna.

I have already suggested that craving cannot take up its residence in Nibbāna. Here I may add an observation which says: *Naṭṭhi vānaṃ*

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etasmiñ adhigateti nibbānañ (When Nibbāna is attained, craving goes out of existence).

THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

In Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, *nirodha saccā*, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is shown thus:—

Katamañca bhikkhave dukkhanirāodho aniyasaccam? Yo tassāyeva tañhāya asesavirganirodho cago paṇinissaggo mutti anālayo. Ayañ vuccat bhikkhave dukkhanirodho ariyasaccam.

And, what, bhikkus, is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

It is the utter fading away and cessation of that very craving, the giving it up, the abandoning it, the release from it, and the detachment from it.

And this, I say, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

(Sayā U Pe Maung Tin's translation.)

Here craving is totally extinguished through walking the Path of Arahatsip. In the absence of craving, no actions arise, and consequently no new becoming, no *nāmas*, no *rūpas*, and no *khandhās*,

On the fiftieth day after enlightenment, Buddha meditated on the essence of Nibbāna which is so subtle that it cannot be easily understood.

THE FOUR UPADHIS

Idampi kho thānaṃ duddasaṃ, yadidaṃ sabba-saṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo vīrāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ.

Verily does Nibbāna exist where all formations cease, where all substrata of being are abandoned, where all desires become extinct, where all passions are spent and where the mass of suffering is brought to its end.

THE FOUR UPADHIS

Upadhi is a substratum of being or the foundation that makes the body, the seat of pleasure and pain or happiness and misery. There are four of them, namely, *kāmupadhi*, *khandhupadhi*, *kilesupadhi*, and *abhisāṅkhārūpadhi*. *Kāmupadhi* is the five constituents of sensual pleasure. They are the causes of ills and miseries, but worldlings take it that they also give them happiness or delight.

Khandhupadhi relates to the five aggregates, which bring suffering to us. Worldlings, however, say that they are also sources of happiness. For them to see beautiful sights or forms, to hear pleasant sounds, to smell sweet fragrance, to taste palatable food, to have a soft touch and to think of agreeable ideas are all enjoyment. But to Arahats these roots of pleasure are all miserable.

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Is it not just to satisfy the demands of pleasure that we work for a living? In our daily rounds of work we have to be careful to save what we earn, at times, at the risk of our lives. As we go hell for leather for the realization of our wants and desires, our interests often clash when quarrels arise even among friends or brothers and sisters. Sometimes when the sense of possession of property is uppermost in our minds, rifts develop even among our parents and our children. Civil suits in courts for inheritance come about in this way. The root cause of all such miserable drama in life can be traced to the attachment to the five constituents of pleasure.

All sufferings stem from *nāmarūpa*. Where these aggregates do not arise, there is the cessation of suffering. Hence *khandhas* are recognized as *khandhupadhi*.

Lobha, avarice, *dosa*, animosity, and *moha*, ignorance or delusion are basic defilements. They always generate suffering in all rounds of existence. They operate in all worlds, whether of devas, or men, or animals or *petas* or *nirayas* (hell). As they form a base for suffering to arise, they are known as *kilesupadhi*.

Accumulation of wholesome and unwholesome actions is called *abhisankhāra*. By dint of charitableness, morality and development of

NIRODHA

mental culture, one may be transported to heaven, and then as a deva or Brahma one may think that one's life as such is an epitome of happiness. People in this world, enjoying the fruits of wholesome actions, also think that they are enjoying happiness. But Arahats see them all as subjected to suffering, for, as their destinies are determined by their *abhisankhāra*, they may, if their kammās go away, go down to the nether worlds. Hence kamma-formations are held to be *abhisankhārupadhi*. In Nibbāna all these four *upadhis* or substrata of being are totally extinguished.

Nirodha as Expounded in Kevaṭṭa Sutta

In the Paṭiccasamuppāda it has been shown that the cessation of ignorance brings about the cessation of kamma-formations, and that the cessation of kamma-formations brings about the cessation of consciousness that leads to the rise of rebirth-linking process and new becoming. Hence, *nirodha*, liberation, is explained in the commentaries as synonymous with Nibbāna. But here suffice it to say that it is cessation or liberation from craving and lust. I shall now refer to Kevaṭṭa Sutta in Sīlakkhadha Vagga for more explanations.

Viññanam anidassanam, anantaṃ sabbatopabham;
ettha āpoca pathavi tejo vāyo na gādhati.

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Ettha dighañca rasssañca, anuñ thūlañ subhasubham, ettha nāmañca rūpañca, asesañ uparujjhati. Viññānassa nirodhena, etthetvañ uparujjhati.

One cannot see consciousness (that can be known only by the Noble Path). It has no limits. It shines with purity. It has no primary elements like earth, fire, water and air. It is neither long nor short; it is neither big nor small; it is neither pleasing nor displeasing to the eye. In Nibbāna all matter that inclines toward the mind ceases totally. Since consciousness is rendered extinct, *nāmārūpas* cease altogether.

Indeed Nibbāna cannot be seen with the naked eye; it can be seen only with the eye of wisdom or Path-knowledge. It is, therefore, beyond comparison. It knows neither beginning nor end, and neither arising nor dissolution. You cannot say that it is here Nibbāna arises and that there it vanishes. Where on earth can anyone discover the beginning or end of a phenomenon when kamma-formations are totally extinguished?

Nibbāna is of pristine purity. Pollution of mind and matter is possible as cravings like greed, anger and ignorance defile *citta*, *cetasika* and *nāma*. In fact they can even pollute wholesome actions. But in Nibbāna no such defilements can arise. Hence we say that its purity is bright and clear. This figurative language

leads to the description of Nibbāna as light. But light is the result of the contact of a sense-base with a sense-object and indicates materiality. In Nibbāna matter is virtually absent; and so to take it as light in a literal sense goes against the teaching of Buddha.

The word, *sabbatopabhami*, that occurs in the above extract from Kevaṇṇa Sutta, has another connotation which emphasises that Nibbāna is the destination reachable through the practice of *kammaṭṭhāna*, mental culture. Visuddhimagga and Abhidhammā mention 40 methods of practice, but in the canonical texts only 38 are shown excluding *āloka kasina* and *ākāsa kasina*. Literally *kasina* means whole and complete. It is an image conceptualised by the meditator as light which extends everywhere completely without limit. Or, in other words, it is a contemplation device on which a concept is imagined. Hence *āloka kasina* is usually rendered as "light device," and *ākāsa kasina* as "space device." The practice of any one of these *kammaṭṭhāna*-subjects of meditation can lead the yogi to the realization of Nibbāna. If one wants to go to sea, one get to it from any place in the coastline. If you want to bathe in a lake, you can get to its waters from any point of its perimeter. In that same way if you want to reach Nibbāna you can take any of the 38 routes that *kammaṭṭhāna* rules prescribe. But, of course, you cannot get

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to your desired destination only through the *samatha* method of training in concentration. You must also take up insight-meditation after accomplishment in *samatha*. *Vipassanā* alone can lead you to *jhāna* or absorption from which stage you can aspire to the ultimate Nibbāna through the realization of Path and Fruition-consciousness.

Once a young monk entered a forest with his companion, a novice, in search of materials for a tooth-brush. The novice found a dead body on the way. Forthwith he meditated on the corpse and attained to the first *jhāna*. He resumed meditating on the rise and fall of the aggregates till he reached the second and third stages, one by one, of the Path and its Fruition. As he was trying for the final fourth stage of *jhāna* leading to *arahatta magga*, he was hailed from afar by his senior. He rose from the *jhāna* and pointed out the corpse to the monk, who, at once, practised meditation till he attained to *anāgāmi* stage. It appears that both the monk and the novice were quite familiar with the methods of insight-meditation, and that, therefore, they became *anāgāmis*. This shows that any of the 38 methods of mind culture can lead one to the Path and Nibbāna.

(Pp, 257 and 258 are left untranslated as they are repetitions.)

MIRACLES

About Miracles

I shall now tell you why Kevaṭṭa sutta was preached by Buddha.

Once Kevaṭṭa approached Buddha and requested him to allow monks to exercise supernormal powers and work miracles or *pāṭihāriya*.

"This Nalanda City is thriving," said Kevaṭṭa, "and citizens are devoted to the Blessed One. But their devotion will become all the more profound if only you would appoint a monk to exhibit *pāṭihāriya* through his psychical powers either fortnightly or monthly."

But the Blessed One refused. Kevaṭṭa, however, repeated his request three times in the fond belief that it is only through an exhibition of supernormal powers that adherents can develop more faith in Buddha; whereas the Enlightened One foresaw reactions resulting from the practice of monks working miracles. So he made a discourse on the three kinds of supernormal powers.

Psychic Powers

Miracles can be produced by *iddhividha abhiññā*, higher knowledge of psychical powers that can conjure up many forms and shapes. In the Texts this is expressed as "being one, he becomes many." The owner of this knowledge can reproduce his likeness a hundred or a thousand

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times. He can fly through the air, walk on water, dive into the earth, bring remote things near and send near objects far away.

When Buddha chastened Aṅgulimāla he conjured up a small plot of ground into a vast expanse, and a fragment of a boulder into a hill. This made the murderer got exhausted as he chased Buddha to kill, for he had to run a great distance while the latter just walked. "Monk!" he shouted at last, "Stop as I stop!" And he stopped running. "Aṅgulimāla!" replied Buddha, "I have stopped while you are still running."

Angulimāla got bewildered on hearing Buddha say that it was he himself who was running while the great monk had stopped, while, in actual fact, it was the other way round. So he sought for an explanation from Buddha who said: "Aṅgulimāla! I have stopped journeying through the rounds of existence as I have discarded defilements. You who still cherish defilements are going round and round in the whirlpool of the saṃsāra." Forthwith Aṅgulimāla saw the light of wisdom and requested Buddha for admission into the Order. "Come hither, bhikkhu!" said Buddha and the ex-killer became a monk. In this instance proximity was made to appear to be remote through the exercise of *iddhi*, miraculous faculty.

MAGICAL POWERS

Mahā Moggalāna converted Kosiya, the Niggardly, and brought him and his wife to jetavana monastery from Sakkara village in Rājagaha by invoking supernormal powers. He worked the miracle of bringing the gate of the monastery to the door-steps of the rich man's mansion. In this case remoteness was made to appear proximate.

Magical Powers

Such miracles contribute no doubt to the development of piety; but they can be discredited by unbelievers who might say: "In the country of Gandhāra, there are magicians who can conjure up wondrous forms and images. Your Teacher might be well-versed in that kind of Gandhāran magic." In fact Buddha actually questioned Kevaṭṭa in that manner and the latter admitted that that could happen. This would not be to the good of the Teaching.

There are also some other drawbacks with regard to the exhibition of supernormal powers. It would go against the observance of *ājiva sila* (correct conduct) if monks accept gifts donated in consideration of the exercise of those powers with sincere motives. If miracles are allowed devotees would be inclined more to those who can work wonder than to ordinary monks practising morality, in which case the precepts kept by the miracle-worker will be deemed to

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have been broken. This is considered unwholesome. A monk may have attained Arahatsip, but he may not possess miraculous powers. Because of this fact a layman's faith and devotion may be weakened. This will affect the prosperity of the *sāsanā*, the Teaching. If that be the case the monk working miracles will naturally be held responsible, and he will be held to have committed unwholesome deed and this will do him no good. When the elder monk, Pindola, worked miracles at the suggestion of Mahā Moggalāna for the acquisition of a bowl of sandalwood, Buddha forbade the display of miraculous powers among sanghas.

Knowledge of Other People's Thoughts

Cetopariya abhiññā is the higher knowledge of other people's thoughts. To know the minds of others is a miracle itself.

There is the story of Buddha's conversion of ascetics under the leadership of Uruvela Kassapa. Once the head of this heretical sect invited Buddha to a feast. Buddha, however, did not attend the feast on the appointed day, but only on the next day. Asked the reason why, Buddha said, "Is it not correct to say that on the day of the feast an idea got into your head that it would be better if I did not come as invited, for, if I came and displayed psychical powers, people's devotion would grow more and more towards me rather than towards you?"

It then occurred to Kassapa that Buddha might be the most powerful as he could read other people's minds. There and then devotion to Buddha developed in him. It was in this way that he was converted by Buddha who exercised his psychical powers called *cetopariya abhiññā*.

Once Buddha was going round for alms-food in Uttaraka village with Sunakkhatta, a monk belonging to the clan of Lacchavi. On the way the latter saw Korakkhattiya, a heretic doing the "dog-practice" by which he simulated the behaviour of a dog. In his previous existence Sunakkhatta indulged in such a practice, and when he saw the man going the way of dogs, he developed a sense of affinity for the latter. Buddha chastised him saying, "Surprising indeed that you should call yourself a Buddhist monk!" The monk reacted to this asking the Blessed One the reason for such a disparaging remark. "Sunakkhatta!" Buddha reprimanded him again, "you are holding the man doing the dog-practice in high esteem. Your veneration to the heretic eating like a dog is misplaced." This is also an example of the application of knowledge of other people's thoughts when Buddha had occasion to reprimand the disciples.

Besides creating wonder, such a way of rebuke may, perhaps, draw more sincere devotees for the faith; but it had also its disadvantages.

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"Those who are well-disposed to the faith," said Buddha, "may have praises for this kind of miracle; but un-believers would say that the Teacher is applying the art of magic practised by those well-versed in Manika mantra." Not to provide any cause for slander, Buddha forbade *patihāriya*.

Power of Dispensation

In the propagation of the dhamma Buddha relied more on his power of dispensation or *anusāsani pratihā* than on super-normal powers. His instructions to his disciples always relate to right thinking. His exhortations are mainly concerned with noting and observing the phenomena. His teachings encourage doing good and shunning evil. His method of admonition is flawless. Anyone who practises what he teaches may become proficient in the establishment of morality, mindfulness and wisdom till he realizes the Path and its Fruition. *Iddhi* or miraculous power may be the most potent in the art of persuasion, but it cannot render the defilements extinct which is the most important in his teaching. Buddha cited the following case of a monk in search of the way to bring about the cessation of the four primary elements.

Where Does Cessation Take Place ?

A monk wanted to know where the four primary elements of earth, fire, water and air

cease totally without leaving any residue. He possessed *iddhivāda abhiññā*, higher knowledge of psychical powers. So he went up to the six Planes of devas and sought for an answer. All the devas in Catumahārājā, Tāvatisā, Yāmā, Tusitā, Nimmānārati and Paranimmitavassavatī informed him that they knew nothing about it and directed him to approach the Great Brahma to get the solution to his riddle of the elements.

So he went to the Great Brahma and asked the latter about the place where the extermination of the four elements takes place.

“O monk!” said the Great Brahma, “I am the greatest. I surpass all. None surpasses me. I see all. Everything comes into being as I will it. I am the Lord of the Universe. I create the Earth and its inhabitants. I am the creator. I am the father of all who come into being now and also of all who will come into being in the future.”

Brahmajāla sutta discusses the theory of creation. According to it, at the beginning of the world, a Brahma came into being in the Plane of the Brahmās. He was then alone. As he gained longevity, he felt oppressed with this loneliness and so he thought to himself that it would be great if he could have company. At this juncture some of the people on this earth

gained *jhāna* and was reborn in the Plane where the Great Brahmā was residing. The new-comers were not as powerful as himself. So he thought that they came into being because he willed them to be. They died in course of time; but remained. Lesser Brahmās, therefore, recognized him as their creator.

But the monk was not asking whether or not the Great Brahmā was really the Great Brahmā who created the Universe. He only wanted to know the place where the four elements meet their end. So he repeated the riddle; and the Great Brahmā kept on saying that he was the creator. As the questioner was persistent, he was at long last obliged to tell him the truth in the absence of all other Brahmās, for, he did not want to let them know his ignorance and, thereby, lost his prestige as the all-knowing and the all-powerful.

“O monk!” he confided, “I do not know anything about the cessation of the elements. You are wrong to have come to me when you have Buddha who can answer your question. Go to him!”

Then only the monk approached Buddha and asked: “Reverend Sir! Where do the four primary elements come to cessation without leaving any residue?”

TOTAL CESSATION OF ALL ELEMENTS

Buddha likened the monk to a bird flying out from a ship at sea in search of land. Not being able to reach it, it comes back to the ship. "You should not have posed the question in the way you did," said Buddha, "Your question suggests as if there is a definite place outside the body where cessation of the elements occur. In fact there is no such place. You should have asked where *pathavi*, *tejo*, *āpo* and *vāyo* lose their footing; that is to say where they lose existence. Likewise you should have asked where do longs and shorts, great and small and good and bad lose their footing. And, you should also have asked where do mind and matter get totally annihilated leaving no residue. If you ask likewise, you shall have the answer."

Then he uttered the *gāthā* which begins with "*viññānaṃ anidassanaṃ, anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ,*" which has been explained extensively before. In Nibbāna, the four elements together with mind and matter have no footing. That is to say, they do not exist.

(The *gāthā* is not reproduced nor translated as it has been mentioned before.)

So far I have expounded the attributes of Nibbāna beginning with its state of emancipation from the world of *taṇhā* to that of cessation

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of all formations of *saṅkhāra* about which, I believe, all that is to be said has been said.

As you have listened with respectful attention to this discourse on Nibbāna, may you be rewarded with enlightenment of the Path and its Fruition that can lead you to Nibbāna where all formations cease as cravings are discarded.

Sādhu ! Sādhu ! Sādhu !

PART VI

(Delivered on the full moon day of Thadingyut, 1326 B.E. corresponding to October 21, 1964).

The celebration of the full moon day of Thadingyut has drawn a large gathering; and so it shall be my purpose to make my sermon suit the occasion. The majority of Buddhists in Burma knows the life and death (*parinibbāna*) of Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī therī, and I shall speak about her today as her biography can reveal salient points about the nature of Nibbāna.

That Nibbāna denotes the cessation of defilements, actions, results of actions and aggregates of mind and matter might well be understood by now after a series of lectures. However, some may go away with the idea that, because cessation is often emphasised, it means nothingness. Actually it is an absolute reality; and if that reality were to be denied there will be nothing left but defilements, actions, results of actions and aggregates, and no one will be able to get away from this whirling of the *saṃsāra*, round of rebirths. This round can be actually stopped or annihilated with the diligent practice of *majjhimaṇṇasīpaṇṇasīpadā*, the Middle Way. Arahats do away with it after the occurrence of their

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death consciousness following their *parinibbāna*. It shows that Nibbānic bliss can actually be established. It is commonly held that cancer is incurable, for there is no medicine for it, while there are medicines for other diseases. This shows that remedies are available for a number of diseases notwithstanding the fact that cancer is incurable. Inasmuch as such remedies are real, the remedy for the complete cure of the affliction by *kilesā*, defilements, is real. Once it is cured, Nibbānic bliss is established.

Nibbānic Peace is Real

The reality of Nibbānic peace has been shown by Buddha in the following passage:

Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akatāṃ asaṅkhatāṃ; no cetāṃ bhikkhave abhavissa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akatāṃ asaṅkhatāṃ; nayidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyetha. Yasma ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajataṃ abhutaṃ akataṃ asankhataṃ; tasma jatāssa bhūtassa katassa asaṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyati.

The element of peace of the Unborn, the Uncreated, the Uncaused and the Unformed does exist. If this element of peace of the Unborn, the Uncreated, the Uncaused and the Unformed were absent, there will exist in this world mind and matter that are born, created, caused and formed, in which case there will be no knowing by an individual of how to escape from this *samsāra*.

MAHA PAJĀPATI GOTAMĪ

Now I shall tell you about the cessation of the round of suffering achieved by Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī therī as she attained *anupādisesa parinibbāna*.

Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī

Buddha's mother is Mahā Māyā Devī. Her younger sister is Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī. Both were the daughters of King Añjana of Devadaha, near Kapilavatthu. King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu married both sisters. Court astrologers predicted that sons born to these two queens would become universal monarchs.

According to the ancients normal span of human life is a hundred years. For chronological purposes it is divided into three periods, each period being again divided into three portions of time. It is the way of mothers of Buddhas to give birth to a son in the last leg of the second period; and based on that fact I have calculated that Mahā Māyā bore the son, Prince Siddhattha, when she was past 56. By today's standards this may not be possible, but in those days of longevity it is reasonable to fix the age as I do.

Seven days after giving birth to the Prince, who was destined to become a Buddha she died to be reborn in Tusitā as a deva. Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī, who might be about 54, succeeded her

elder sister as chief queen, and soon she also gave birth to Prince Nanda. She nurtured both her own son and her elder sister's, but she breast-fed her step-son leaving her own to the care of a wet nurse. On that score Burmese Buddhists used to say that Buddha was highly indebted to her step-mother.

Prince Siddhattha grew to the age of sixteen when he was married to Yasodharā, the daughter of King Suppabuddha of Devadaha. Lolling in the lap of luxury of the royalty, he enjoyed life to the full until he became disgusted with it; and at the age of 29 he renounced the world to become a recluse. For six years he practised austerities which he abandoned in the end realizing that they availed him not in the search for Truth and Enlightenment. He then took up *majjhimaṇipadā* and attained enlightenment on the full moon day of Kason (about May) when he reached 35.

After the attainment of Buddhahood, he went to the Deer Park in Isipatana; and on the full moon day of Wāso (about July) he preached Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta to the group of five monks among whom Kondañña became a stream-winner the very first day he heard the Law. The other four followed him suit after one, two, three and four days respectively. On the 5th waning of Wāso Buddha preached Anatta Lakkhana Sutta when all the five monks

became Arahats. During the first vassa or Retreat 55 monks headed by Yasa attained Arahatship.

By the end of the first Retreat Buddha had gathered around him 60 Arahats whom he charged to go all over the country to propagate the dhamma. He himself converted 1,000 ascetics led by Uruvela Kassapa. They all became Arahats and accompanied Buddha to Rājagaha. At the first gathering of welcome extended to him by King Bimbisāra and his 110,000 subjects, Buddha preached the Four Noble Truths. Having realized them, the King built Veluvana monastery for the All-Enlightened who took up residence there preaching the dhamma around Rājagaha and Gijjhakūṭa Hill. When King Suddhodana came to know of this, he sent ten court officials, each with a following of 1,000, to persuade his son, now the Enlightened One, to come to Kapilavatthu. But none of the emissaries ever returned as they all sought ordination under the wing of the Teaching. At last the King sent Kāludāyi explicitly enjoining him to sing an ode to the beauty of summer in sixty stanzas, for, it is usually the best season for travel any time anywhere. I give below my own translation of two of the stanzas which can be recited as a devotional.

Trees have shed their leaves and donned
a new foliage of flaming red that engulfs

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the entire forest. It is now time for you
O Great Man, to return to your City!

The season is neither too cold nor too hot. Fields covered with a carpet of green grass portend abundance that knows no famine. It is now time for you, O Great Sage, to return to your City!

So on the first waning of Taboung (about March) Buddha left Rājagaha, a distance of 60 *yojanas*, marching one *yojana* a day, for Kapilavatthu City which was reached on the full moon day of Kason (about May). All the relatives welcomed him and brought him to Nigrodhārāma monastery.

Men of Sākiyan clan are known for their pride. Buddha was then only 36, and so the relatives who were older than he were loth to pay him homage. They preferred to remain at the back pushing in front their younger brothers, sons, nephews and grandsons who would worship the Enlightened One. In order that the whole Sākiyan clan could know the virtues of the Enlightened, Buddha worked a miracle creating a huge cloister for him where he revealed himself walking as his body spewed out fire and water together. On seeing this, King Suddhodana bowed and "shikkoed" his son, and thereafter all followed his example.

KING SUDDHODANA AND QUEEN GOTAMI

KING SUDDHODANA AND QUEEN GOTAMI BECOME STREAM-WINER

Next morning Buddha, accompanied by 20,000 monks, went round the City of Kapilavatthu for alms-food. Yasodharā saw this from the window of her palace and reported the matter to the King saying that it was beneath the dignity of a king's son to go about begging. Suddhodana got ashamed and rushed out from the throne to Buddha and made the protest. "Why do you," he said, "put me to shame by going round the city a-begging? Do you think that I cannot feed you and your 20,000 followers?" Buddha told his father that it is the practice of all Buddhas to go round for alms in the event when no individual donor had had the occasion to ask them to visit his or her house for an offering of meals. He then uttered this stanza.

"One should never be negligent in the declared principles of priestly conduct of going round for alms. One should practise it as it is good and noble; and one who practises it can sleep well not only in this world but also in other worlds."

Having heard this, the King bent his mind on the import of the statement and saw the light of the dhamma and became a stream-winner (*sotāpanna*).

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In the commentaries it has been pointed out that development of *pīti*, joy, in thinking of the nobleness of the virtues possessed by Buddha can lead one to the acquirement of insight-knowledge into the transient nature of the phenomenon of *pīti* itself as it arises and passes away. For present day individuals a whole day of meditation is not sufficient for the development of *samādhi*, concentration. It may take them a week or so to gain it in order to realize the nature of mind and matter. For King Suddhodana, however, realization of the dhamma was momentous because he had perfected himself for such realization since time immemorial. So when he came to know that priestly conduct required Buddha and his Order not to ask for food verbally, but by simply standing in front of the house of a would-be donor, he became complaisant towards Buddha for such a conduct. It led him to the development of joy. He meditated on that joy and realized its nature of origination and dissolution. In an instant insight-knowledge blossomed forth and he became a stream-winner.

The King took the bowl from Buddha's hands and invited all the monks to his palace where he intended to make a grand offering.

Once in the presence of Queen Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī and the courtiers, Buddha again lauded

the virtues of priestly conduct, on hearing which Buddha's step-mother also became a *sotāpanna*.

COUSIN NANDĀ AND SON RĀHULĀ

Next day the King held a ceremony to install Prince Nanda, his son by Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī, regent, and to mark the occasion made offerings of alms-meal to Buddha and his disciples. When it was over, Buddha gave his alms-bowl to his cousin, Prince Nanda, and returned to the monastery. The latter followed him with reluctance, and he was seen by Janapadakalyāni, his betrothed. "Come back soon, dear!" the princess entreated.

But when he got to the monastery he was asked by Buddha if he would become a monk. He gave his half-hearted assent in awe and reverence to the Enlightened. He was duly admitted to the Order. A week later, Rāhula, the son, came to the monastery to ask for inheritance from his father at his mother's bidding. But Buddha told Sāriputtarā to ordain him, and so he became a *sāmaṇera* (novice). Soon after that the Enlightened One gave Suddhodana a sermon about Mahā Dhammapāli Jātaka, and the latter forthwith attained to the stage of an *anāgāmi*, non-returner.

Leaving Kapilavatthu Buddha changed his residence to Anupiya Nigama village in Malla Kingdom; and while he was staying there,

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Bhaddiya, King of the Sākiyas, Anuruddha, Ānandā, Bagu, Kimila and Devadattha, all princes, accompanied by their barbar Upāli, came to him and requested that they all be ordained. In that first Retreat, Bhaddiya became an Arahāt while Anuruddha attained *dibbacakkhu ñāṇa*, Divine Eye, and Ānandā won the stage of a stream-winner. Devadattha also gained *iddhi-vidha abhiññā*, super-normal powers.

PARINIBBĀNA OF SUDDHODANA, THE ARAHAT

Buddha again moved out from Anupiya Nigama to Rājagaha to spend the second and following Retreat there. While he was spending the fifth Retreat at Kūṭāgārasāla monastery of Mahāvana Forest in Vesāli, King Siddhodana died in his own palace in Kapilavatthu. Before he died he meditated on the dhamma and gained the Path and its Fruition and became an Arahāt. He died the *parinibbāna* death. Buddha attended the funeral of his father.

ADMISSION OF WOMEN INTO THE ORDER

After the *parinibbāna* of King Siddhodana, Queen Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī approached Buddha for permission of women to gain admittance to the Order. Thrice it was sought and thrice it was rejected. This statement is made on the authority of the commentaries on Therī Gāthā: Other versions suggest that she sought permis-

ADMISSION OF WOMEN INTO THE ORDER

sion as early as the first Retreat in Kapilavatthu; but the commentaries are held to be reliable. The story goes as follows.

When Buddha was residing at Kūṭāgārasāla monastery at Vesālī, on return from Kapilavatthu where he attended his father's funeral, 500 princes of both Sākiya and Koliya clans, refugees from internecine strife over the dispute regarding the use of the waters of the Rohini river, requested Buddha for their ordination; and they were duly admitted into the Order. Their wives, now without their men, became weary of life and approached Gotamī to request Buddha to admit women into the Order as they all wanted to become bhikkhunīs. Mahā Pajāpati and the 500 princesses shaved their heads, donned yellow robes and marched the 51 *yojanas* to Vesālī which took two months. They arrived there with swollen feet.

Arriving at the gate of the monastery Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī wept at the thought that if she and the five hundred failed to get permission for ordination they all would be stranded in a foreign land with only shaven heads and yellow robes to their credit.

ĀNANDĀ INTERVENED

When Ānandā saw all this, he told Buddha's step-mother to wait awhile as he approached the Enlightened One to get the permission. As

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

usual Buddha refused to give permission. Then Ānandā asked: "Reverend Sir! Cannot womenfolk attain to Four Noble Paths and Fruitions if they abide in the dhamma under the wing of your Teaching?" Buddha conceded that they could. "Your Reverence!" Ānandā entreated again, "If that be so, please grant their request to get ordained as bhikkhunīs in this *sāsana*. Mahā Pajāpati has done a great service to you, as your nurse and foster-mother, feeding you with milk from her own breast."

It was usual for women to get ordained as bhikkhunīs in the realms of the *sāsanas* of previous Buddhas. But the Enlightened One was loth to give in to the wishes of womenfolk easily for he foresaw advantages to his Teaching and also to female devotees if admission to the Order was rendered difficult by strict discipline.

PERMISSION GRANTED

Buddha then ordained: "If, Ānandā, Mahā Pajāpati will take upon herself the eight strict Rules of Discipline called *gārudhamma*, let this be for her ordination."

So she was ordained on her acceptance of the strict Rules of Discipline. Others, however, were ordained according to the rules of procedure that requires *kammavācā*, or a vote of chapters of monks. Subsequent ordinations lay

MAHĀ PAJĀPATI GOTAMI

down the requirement of the first round of votes by bhikkhunīs (nuns) followed by a second round by bhikkhus (monks).

Henceforth Mahā Pājāpati became known by her ecclesiastical name of Gotamī therī and she soon won Arahatsip under the religious guidance of Buddha. When Arahats discard all defilements, their actions, even when they are wholesome, are rendered inoperative, unable to bring about any result, such as becoming; and new actions, therefore, cease to arise with them. Referring to this fact, we used to say that Arahats deny themselves of *kusala kamma* or actions that earn merit. This does not mean the abnegation of wholesome deeds; but it emphasises the absence of action-results that should have accrued from them. Arahats do perform such meritorious round of duties as doing obeisance to Buddha and the Sangha, practice *jhanic* trance and insight-meditation but these good deeds are not kammically rewarded.

When Mahā Pājāpati became a bhikkhunī, she might be in her very ripe old age of 94, while Buddha was about 40. Her followers, the 500 princesses, deserted by their husbands during the warring period, entered the Order and later they all became Arahats on hearing the sermon given by Nandaka thera, a former Sākiyan prince.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

PARINIBBĀNA OF GOTAMĪ THERĪ

When Gotamī Therī had completed 26 years of life as a bhikkhunī, she reached the age of 120, while Buddha was 66. At that time she was residing with her 500 bhikkhunīs at a monastery not far off from Kūṭāgārasāla monastery where Buddha was also residing temporarily. One day as she was absorbed in *jhāna* leading to the attainment of Fruition, she came to realize that it was time for her to shake off the sum of her life, *āyusaṅkhāra*. Her disciples, who were in their sixties or seventies, were also of the same opinion as their mentor that it was time for them to depart. So they went in a body to Buddha to inform the latter that they were going to enter *parinibbāna*. On hearing this sad news female disciples of Gotamī therī broke down and wept. She, therefore, comforted them.

*Ruditena alam puttā, hāsakalo'yamajjavo.
Cirappabhuti yaṁ mayhaṁ, patthitaṁ ajja sijjhate
Ānandabherikālo yaṁ, kiṁ vo assūhi puttikā.*

Weep not, O daughter! This should be a day of rejoicing for you!

Long, O daughters, have I aspired for Nibbāna; and today my aspirations are to be realized. Now is the time for me to beat the drum of satisfaction and joy. It availeth not for you to cry.

PARINIBBĀNA OF GOTAMĪ THERĪ

It is but natural that women must weep when death deprives them of their beloved. But it is no stranger for us mortals. What is most important for us, however, is not to get sunk to the nether worlds once we leave this world for the beyond. When, weighed in the balance, wholesome *kammas* are found wanting, death will indeed be an occasion for sorrow and despair. But it affords us a good cause for us to rejoice when we die with a consciousness rendered pure and unblemished by an accumulation of wholesome *kammas*, in which case, dying is just moving out from an old house to a new one.

About one thousand *kalpas* ago, when Padumuttara Buddha gained enlightenment, Gotamī Therī was born the daughter of a minister in royal service. One day, as she attended a religious service presided by the prevailing Buddha, she became inspired by the example of an elderly bhikkhunī who nursed and brought up the Bodhisatta as a child when his mother died, as she was also the step-mother. Padumuttara conferred upon her the honour of pre-eminence, *etadagga*, as a dignitary of the Order as she was the oldest in age and the most senior in the service of the *sāsanā* among all bhikkhunīs who had seen many days. Gotamī Therī, then a minister's daughter as aforesaid, considered the life of a Buddha's mother as the noblest.

ON THE NATURE OF NĪBBĀNA

So she made a wish that she be reborn in one of the future worlds as a step-mother to a Bodhisatta; and her wish came to be fulfilled at the time of Gotama Buddha.

Now that the end was near, Gotamī therī left a word of advice for those weeping. "O daughters!" she said, "if you truly love me, abide in the dhamma so that Buddha's Teaching may last long. He has given us permission to enter the Order, and I have been happy for this boon, and I believe you too are happy. If that be so, practise dhamma in such a happy mood."

HER TRIBUTE TO BUDDHA

Having thus comforted her devotees she approached Buddha and paid him tribute in the following terms.

"Reverend Sir!" she said, "I am commonly known as your mother. But from the point of view of the dhamma, you are, indeed, my father. Under the wing of your teaching I have become an *Ariya*, Noble One. I brought you up feeding you with my milk. You brought me up with the milk of your dhamma. My milk appeased your hunger for a time. Your dhamma stamped out the hunger of *taṇhā*, craving, for eternity."

THREE GĀTHĀS

So saying, she uttered the following stanzas.

*Raṇṇo mātā mahesīti, sulabham nāma mitthīnam.
Buddhamātāti yaṁ nāman, etaṁ paramadullabham.*

*Parinibbātu micchāmi vihāyemaṁ kalevaram;
Anujānāhi me vīra, dukkhantakara nāyaka.*

*Cakkankusadhajakinne pāde; kamalakomate;
Pasārehi paṇāman te, karissam puttauttame.*

For a woman to be a queen, the mother of a universal monarch, is easy of achievement. But extremely difficult indeed for her to gain the honour of the mother of a Buddha

O Buddha! Exterminator of Suffering!
Man of Courage! Lord of this World!
Grant me, O Lord, permission to discard
this body and enter Nibbāna!

O my Son! Spread out your noble feet,
soft as lotus-petals, marked with the sign
of the Wheel, the Hook and the Flag, in
order that I can do obeisance.

THREE GĀTHĀS WHICH CAN BRING BLESSINGS

She also recited the following three gāthās which portend auspiciousness to those who pay homage to Buddha in flesh and blood.

ON THE NATURE OF¹ NIBBĀNA

1. *Nadato parisāyaṃ te, vāditabbapahārino;
Ye te dakkhanti vadanāṃ, dhaññā tenarapuṅgava.*
2. *Dighaṅgulī tambanakhe, sube ayatapanhike.
Ye pāde paṇamissanti, tepi dhannā guṇandhara.*
3. *Madhurāni pahaṭṭhāni, desagghāni hitāni ca.
Ye te vākyāni sossyanti, tepi dhaññā naruttama.*

1. Lord of all Men! When you deliver the dhamma to the audience, your voice reverberates like the sound of drums. Fortunate and auspicious are those who have seen the lips that produce these sounds in flesh and blood.
2. Possessor of Virtue! Fortunate and auspicious are those who bow in clasped hands in homage at your feet, slender-toed, red-nailed and long-heeled.
3. Noblest of All Men! Fortunate and auspicious are those who shall hear you speak in a sweet voice, inspiring joy, dispelling human failing and sustaining prosperity.

What Gotamī therī emphasised in those gāthās was that although it would be her last to see Buddha face to face, pay him homage and hear his dhamma, those whom she was about to leave behind would have the good fortune to continue to abide with him, revering him and hear his teachings.

THREE GĀTHĀS

Now that you are hearing the words of Buddha as you listen to this discourse you should rejoice! But those who in the past were able to hear him preach in flesh and blood are more fortunate than the present audience, for they were twice blessed in that they could hear his voice and at the same time get the benefit of the dhamma. However, what is most to be rejoiced at is for you to have this opportunity to know and understand what is now being preached by Buddha's disciples. If insight-knowledge is developed and the Path and Fruition are realized, one can at least be a stream-winner. If one becomes a *sakadāgāmi*, or an *anāgāmi*, or an *Arahta*, all the better. So the present audience may comfort themselves with the fact that they are equally fortunate and auspicious as the disciples in Buddha's days.

The gāthā suggests that Buddha's voice is mellifluous. The scriptures describe it as very much like the sound a *karaweik*-bird makes. Regarding this, there is the story of Queen Asandhimittā, wife of King Sīridhammāsoka, who, hearing the voice of this bird, recalled Buddha's voice with joy on which she fixed her mind and meditated with the result that she became a stream-winner.

It is also mentioned in the gāthā that Buddha's voice gladdens the heart of his hearers. Once

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

a farmer became sorely distressed as his wheat field was flooded. Buddha in his compassion came to him and preached Kāma Sutta, which gladdened the heart not only of the farmer but also of his wife, both of whom attained to the Path of *Sotāpatti* in the end.

The death of Bimbisāra tormented Ajātasattu, the patricide. Buddha preached him Sāmaññaphala Sutta on the beatitudes of a homeless life. The King regained peace of mind. He could have become a *sotāpanna*, had not the unwholesome kamma of killing his own father overtaken him.

Lastly, the gāthā points out that Buddha's words or teachings dispel all human failings like anger, hatred and so on. Listening to Buddha one becomes enabled in doing away with unwholesome actions as one comes to realize one's misdeeds and reform oneself. Mindfulness to the teaching leads one to the practice of insight-meditation which wipes out all evils or *akusala kammās*. Tambadāṭhika was a murderer. But as he listened to Sāriputtarā's sermons, his mind became bent on insight-meditation; and when he died he was reborn a deva in Tusitā. Aṅgulimāla was worse than Tambadāṭhika, as he had killed many. But hearing Buddha's teaching, he became a monk who later attained Arahatsip.

GOTAMI PAYS LAST RESPECT TO SANGHĀ

Buddha's teachings are conducive to prosperity in life. If one practises the dhamma, merits can be gained here and now, not only in after-life. If the usual practice is supported by insight-meditation, it can lead one to the Path.

OBEISANCE TO SANGHAS

Gotamī therī approached the sanghas including grandson Rāhulā, son Nanda and nephew Ānandā, and uttered the following two gāthās tendering her respects to them all.

*Āsivisālayasame, rogāvāse kaḷevare;
Nibbindā dukkhasaṅghāte, jarāmarañagocare.
Nānākali malākiṇṇe, parāyatte nirīhake;
tena nibbātumicchāmi, anumaññatha puttakā.*

My son and my grandson! Weary have I grown with this corpse of a body which is like unto the haunt of poisonous snakes, the seat of all diseases, the house of suffering, the resort of old age and death, the garbage of filth and dirt, always subservient to others and never self-sustaining. Fain would I have this suffering ended. Allow me to have my wish fulfilled.

This body is made up of four primary elements, *pathavī, tejo, āpo* and *vāyo*. *Pathavī* denotes hardness or softness of matter and is represented in the body by twenty varieties of physical matter comprising hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, heart, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines, rectum,

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

brain etc. *Apo* is also represented by twelve physiological items such as pus, bile, blood, sweat, fats, tears, urine and the like. *Tejo* is represented by four kinds of heat; while *vāyo* comprises six kinds of wind including that which is involved in breathing. For all sentient beings these elements are a source of misery and pain, for when they act abnormally sickness and death will be the result. Hence they are likened to poisonous snakes.

That this body is the seat of all kinds of ailments needs no elaboration. Gotamī therī had expressed her desire to leave this domain of old age, disease and death.

The thirty-two portions of our body (*koṭṭoāsa*) are always subjected to disease which people abhor as if they were filth. But we should be more concerned with the impurities of the mind rather than of the physical body. Unwholesome actions beget unwholesome results. Arahats do not have to worry about them. But since mental formations are universal to all of us, we must be mindful of the upsurge of defilements that contaminate us like filth and dirt.

We say: "This body is mine." But is it truly ours? According to the ancients, it is a veritable living quarter for eighty kinds of worms (or *Parāsites*). In fact what we call our body is

GOTAMI AND ĀNANDĀ

their home. Insects like flies, mosquitoes and bugs prey on it. Hence we say that it is always subservient to others.

This human body is unable to maintain itself for its own health and welfare. This can best be seen when it is afflicted with disease. It cannot cure itself, and so you, who claim to be the owner, have to call in the doctor. It cannot sustain itself by its own efforts. It always depends on outside factors for its own welfare.

GOTAMI THERI COMFORTED ĀNANDĀ

At the time Gotamī therī was bidding the sanghas farewell, Nanda and Rāhulā had been Arahats already; and so they were unmoved by the impending *parinibbāna* (death) of their old mother and grandmother. But Ānandā was then only a *sekha*, a disciple still to be trained for the Path. So he broke down and wept.

*Hā santim Gotamī yāti, nūna Buddhepi nibbutim;
Gacchati na cireneva, aggiriva nirindhano.*

Alas! Gotamī theri is entering Nibbāna where peace reigns supreme. Soon Buddha would also cease to be, extinguished like a flame as the wick is burnt out.

On hearing Ānandā bemoaning the lot, Gotamī theri comforted him in the following words.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

*Suta sāgaragambhīra, Buddhopaṭṭhāna tappara;
Na yuttam socitum putta, hāsakāle upaṭṭhite;
tayā me saraṇam putta, nibbānam tamupāgataṃ.
Tayā tāta samijjhiṭṭho, pabbajjam anujāni no;
Mā putta vimano hohi, saphalo te parissamo.
Yam na diṭṭham purāṇehi, titthikācariyehipi;
āam padam sukumārīhi, sattavassāhi veditam.*

You Ānandā ! who possess knowledge deep and wide as the ocean, and who have set upon yourself the task of caring for Buddha! Be not sad on this occasion for rejoicing. I am taking refuge in Nibbāna as you have, with all your assistance, enabled me to take it.

Ānandā, my son! at your request for our benefit, Buddha has permitted us women-folk to get ordained as bhikkhunis. You need not be distressed, for your great efforts will be amply rewarded.

O Ānandā ! Previously no *titthis* (heretics) could discover Nibbāna in spite of their religious practices. Now even a seven-year old girl comes to know of it.

In this way Gotamī therī paid her tribute to Ānandā for his part in winning the permission of Buddha for female devotees to get into the Order. As laity the therī and her followers might find it hard to become Arahats. But thanks to Ānandā, they had by now become

MIRACLES OF GOTAMI

Arahats, and what was more, many a bhikkhuni had gained the opportunity to practise the dhamma for the realization of the Path well after the death of Buddha. Outside the domain of Buddhist teaching, before Buddha's enlightenment, there were ascetics like Sarabhaṅga, Ālāra and Udaka who possessed *abhiññā*, supernormal powers, but they knew not Nibbāna. But when lay women had been admitted into the Order, even a young girl of seven could be familiar with Nibbāna. Therefore, Ānandā had made a great achievement in his life for which he should be happy.

MIRACLES OF GOTAMI THERĪ

As the time for *parinibbāna* approached, Buddha asked Gotamī Therī to exercise her *abhiññā*.

*Thīnam dhammābhisamaye, ye bālā vimatiṃ gatā;
tesam diṭṭhippahānatham; iddhiṃ dassahi Gotamī.*

Gotami! The ignorant are in doubt about the ability of womenfolk to get the light of the dhamma. In order to dispel this doubt, you will please exercise your *iddhi*, miraculous powers.

Heretics were having their day at the time of Buddha in spite of his teaching. They refused to accept the fact that lay women practising concentration or meditation leading to

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

the realization of the Path could gain *jhāna* and *abhiññā*. For their enlightenment Buddha asked Gotamī therī to exercise *pāṭihārīya*, exhibition of psychic powers. Previously Buddha was wont to proscribe it to repel adverse criticism by malefactors saying that bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs indulged in magic. But now that Gotamī was making her last bow such criticisms would be rendered innocuous by her death.

Then Gotamī therī worked miracles. Being one, she appeared as many. Being many, she appeared only as one. That is to say she created many likenesses of herself and reduced the number of those likenesses into one. She flew into the air and dived into the earth. She showed herself in various shapes and forms, especially assuming the apparition of a universal monarch accompanied by a retinue of courtiers. This exhibition of her supernormal abilities strengthen the faith of believers and won over the hearts of non-believers. This is a general statement. It might be that dogmatism could also be at work when people would refuse to believe even when you showed that you could fly.

THE LAST REQUEST

Having done miracles at Buddha's bidding Gotamī therī made her last request.

PARINIBBĀNA OF GOTAMĪ

*Sā visavassasatikā, jatiyāhaṃ mahāmune;
Alamettāvatā vīra, nibbāyissāmi nāyaka.*

O Great Man! I have come to the age of six score years. Let these miracles be enough. Allow me to enter Nibbāna where all sufferings cease.

Buddha gave his assent by remaining silent. Then Gotamī therī and her five hundred departed for their monastery. Buddha following them in their last journey. At the gate they all paid their last respects to Buddha.

THE PARINIBBĀNA

All bhikkhunīs led by Gotamī therī retired to their respective places and sat kneeling in the fashion of yogis. Female devotees surrounded them mostly weeping. Taking one of them to her side, and patting her fondly on the head, the eldest of all therīs gave the following words of advice.

*Alaṃ puttā visādena, mārapāsānuvattinā;
Aniccaṃ saṅkhatam sabbaṃ, viyogantaṃ calācalaṃ.*

It availeth not for you to weep, O daughters! You should not thus surrender yourselves to the dictates of your Temptor, the Defilement. All formations of mind and matter are transient; at long last we have to part with them. Nothing is everlasting.

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

Then, having sent back the devotees to places where they resided, Gotamī therī went into meditation. She attained the first *jhāna*, then the second, and then the third, and then the fourth in proper order. And then she came back to the first *jhāna* in reverse order. Then again she repeated the process from the first and when she attained the fourth *jhāna*, all her *khandhās* came to cessation just like the blowing out of a flame as both the oil and the wick have been completely consumed. All her five hundred bhikkhunīs also entered Nibbāna in like manner.

The remains of Gotamī therī were cremated. Ānandā collected the bones and ashes and handed them over in a casket to Buddha who held it in his hands and paid tribute to his step-mother saying, "Her death is like the breaking of a big bough from a big tree. She has crossed the ocean of the *samsāra*. Since all defilements have come to an end, all suffering are annihilated. While living, she was a woman of high intellect besides being the most senior among all the bhikkhunīs, possessed of the five *abhiññās*, highly proficient in *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*, knowledge with regard to the extinction of passions, and a perfect bhikkhunī.

IN PRAISE OF NIBBĀNA

Then Buddha uttered the following two gāthās.

IN PRAISE OF NIBBĀNA

*Ayoghanahatasseva, jalato jātavedassa;
anupubbūpasantassa, yathā na ñayate gati.
Evaṃsammā vimuttānaṃ, kāmabandhoghatāriṇaṃ;
paññāpetuṃ gati natthi, pattānaṃ acalaṃ sukhaṃ.*

Just as there is no way of knowing whither the sparks fly that flash one after another as the sledge-hammer strikes, even so there is no way of knowing where the destiny (of Arahats) lies as floods of sensual desire are overcome and peace and tranquillity firmly established.

As the blacksmith wields his sledge-hammer on the anvil, sparks flash for a brief moment and die out. There is no way of knowing where they go. The Arahats overcome the rushing tide of the floods of defilements such as sensual desire and the like. In the absence of attachment, actions, signs of actions and signs of destiny fail to give rise to formation of sense-objects. With insight-meditation death consciousness, appertaining to *parinibbāna*, casts off *nāma* and *rūpa* which cease to flow with the realization of Nibbāna—peace. All formative activities come to a stand still. So there is no way of knowing to which of the 31 planes of existence the Arahats go. In this analogy the sparks are impermanent and unreal, and, therefore, non-existent. In the same way *nāma* and *rūpa*, that made up the basis of life before the

parinibbāna, are impermanent, unreal and non-existent.

Those clinging to the idea of *atta*, self, might put forward the proposition that the individuality of the Arahats has gone to nothingness. But, first and foremost, it must be remembered that there is no individuality. What we commonly call an individual is nothing but a representation of the phenomenon of the rise and fall of aggregates. Depending on this phenomenon, *upādāna*, attachment, arises; but it is but a mass of suffering. When morality, concentration and meditation are correctly practised, the kind of weariness of like what Gotamī therī spoke of will be developed. Then the cord of attachment to *nāma* and *rūpa* will be totally cut off. So after the death consciousness of the Arahats, all substrata of existence are annihilated. This does not mean nothingness; but it does mean the reality of the total cessation of the round of suffering.

When no new becoming arises on the cessation of suffering, aging, disease and death and all kinds of woes and miseries that accompany it disappear altogether.

One may ask if it will not be far better if we can go to heaven where there is no aging, disease and death? But this is idealism in its highest magnitude. This kind of heaven exists

BUDDHA'S EXHORTATION

only in imagination. Whatever arises gets dissolved. The abode of devas and Brahmas are heavens indeed. But there you will find *nāma* and *rūpa* that are constantly in a state of flux now arising, now passing away. So when their terms of existence expire, they also die !

So it is only with the extinction of *nāma* and *rūpa* that reveals us the Truth of Suffering that real happiness can be found. By means of the Path and its Fruition, craving which reveals us the Truth of the Cause of Suffering can be exterminated. Then only will the *khandhās* cease to arise after the death consciousness relating to *parinibbāna*. When they come to cessation *anupādisesa nibbāna* is achieved.

BUDDHA'S EXHORTATION

Apādāna Pali Text, where an account of Gotamī therī is given, contains an *uyyōjana gāthā* or exhortation by Buddha to his disciples.

*Atta dīpā tato hotha, satipaṭṭhāna gocarā;
Bhavetvā satta bojjhaṅge, dukkhassantaṃ karissatha.*

Be ye islands unto yourselves abiding in the domain of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* or objects of mindfulness as you gain emancipation. Having developed the *bojjhaṅgas* or the seven requisites for the attainment of

ON THE NATURE OF NIBBĀNA

supreme knowledge, shall ye achieve the Path and its Fruition where all sufferings end.

Kāyānupassanā is contemplation of the physical body, *vedanānupassanā* contemplation of feeling or sensation, *cittānupassanā* contemplation of mind and *dhammānupassanā* contemplation of the dhammas. Buddha exhorted his disciples to practise contemplation as prescribed in Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and establish themselves in the domain of such contemplation. This is developing an island for them to live in. If these four modes of contemplation are practised they can aspire to the fulfilment of the seven requisites that can lead them to supreme knowledge which paves the way to Nibbāna.

Concluding, let me pray for the members of this audience who have listened to this discourse with due respect and attention. May they all attain Nibbāna as soon as possible by virtue of their wholesome thoughts and actions in the practice of mindfulness or contemplation in accordance with the rules of *satipaṭṭhāna* which can lead them to the realization of the seven requisites of supreme knowledge.

Sadhu!

Sādhu!

Sādhu!

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